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[THE MYSTERY OF THE DIAMOND BRACELET.]

LADY ROSLYN'S MYSTERY.

CHAPTER XIX.

Better confide, and be deceiv'd.
A thousand times, by treacherous foes,
Than once accuse the innocent,
Or let suspicion mar repose.

Mrs. Osgood.

THE self-possession of the pretended Count Lechelle had deserted him but for a moment. By the time the earl's knock upon the door of the boudoir had been repeated, he was himself again, as cool, quiet, and careless as ever.

"Courage, Adine!" he whispered to the alarmed countess, who still stood like a marble statue.

"All is lost!" murmured the young bride, his words falling upon deafened ears.

"All is not lost. Regain your self-possession. Your whole destiny depends upon your conduct at this moment. That door yonder opens into your bed-chamber?"

"Yes, but my maid may be busy in there!" Count Lechelle did not look at all disturbed by this announcement.

His fertile brain had suggested an excellent expedient which would favour his escape, and he now acted upon it.

He listened a moment to the sound of horses' hoofs, as Malvern rode up the avenue towards the mansion, and then he mounted lightly upon the marble-topped centre-table, and quickly turned off the lights, leaving the room in perfect darkness.

He leaped down as lightly as he had mounted, and said:

"Courage, Adine. Unlock the door. *Au revoir!*" While speaking, he glided across the floor, opened the window sufficiently to give egress to his slender figure, and stood upon the balcony.

Favoured by the intense darkness, he sprang into the tree, slid to the ground, and sauntered away in the darkness, his movements entirely unsuspected by Malvern, between whom and Lady Roslyn's window a tree had momentarily intervened.

Had his movements been but a little slower, detection would have been inevitable, for the next moment Malvern discovered that the countess's light had been suddenly extinguished, and he involuntarily checked his horse, while he puzzled himself for a solution to the singular phenomenon, for the hour was too early for her ladyship to think of retiring.

With a glimmering of the truth, he gave rein to his steed, and rode up under the windows of the boudoir, but he saw no sign of the departed visitant.

Assured that Lechelle had escaped, and that she was safe, the blood bounded in the veins of the countess, and she felt a renewal of hope and energy.

As her husband's knock sounded for the third time, and more loudly, as if the earl were becoming alarmed at her continued silence, she crossed the room, turned the key in the lock, and opened the door.

Lord Roslyn, revealed by the light that glowed in the corridor, stood before her.

"In the dark, Adine?" he said, endeavouring to look at her face, as she shrank back into the gloom.

"Are you ill?"

"No," she answered, striving to command her voice.

There must have been something unusual in her manner or tone, for again he strove to regard her countenance.

"Then this gloom is not good for you," he said, quietly. "Permit me to light your lamps!"

He produced from his pocket a cigar-case, took from it a tiny waxen match, ignited it, and applied himself to the task of lighting each of the six lamps that ornamented the branches of the great chandelier.

The result was a flood of mellow radiance that lighted up every corner of the room, and beamed brightest upon the face and figure of the countess, who shaded her eyes from the sudden glare.

Lord Roslyn's first act was to cast a rapid yet comprehensive glance around the room.

He then looked at the half-open window.

"All alone, Adine?" he asked. "I thought I heard voices when I first knocked. Has not Lucette been with you?"

The young countess noticed that he was deathly pale, and that his countenance was stern and his lips quite white as he asked the question.

By this time she had recovered her self-possession, and a feeling that was almost one of desperation had entered her heart.

"No," she answered, "Lucette has not been with me."

"And you have been entirely alone?" persisted the earl, not at all satisfied by her response.

"No one can be entirely alone when they have thoughts for company," she said, evasively.

"Pardon me, Adine, but you have not answered my question."

The countess withdrew her hand from her eyes, and drew up her slight, queenly figure with an indignation and haughtiness that were not assumed, and exclaimed:

"You forget, my lord, that I am Lady Roslyn. I, however, never forget the fact for a single moment, nor that I am a Sayton!"

The earl seemed about to reply, then hesitated, and looked steadfastly at her with a gaze at once stern and sorrowing.

He did not doubt her word that she ever kept in mind her rank, and was careful to do nothing to cloud its brightness, but he felt that there was a deep and tangible mystery about her, and he would have given his right hand to have been able to fathom it.

He was convinced that he had heard the murmur of voices, as he stood knocking at her door, and her evasive reply had only confirmed his conviction; yet how could he suspect any wrong of that noble-looking woman, with her crown of shimmering golden hair, with her large, luminous eyes, and pure, lovely face?

He looked at her with a straightforward intentness, longing for the power to read her inscrutable heart, and she looked back at him unflinchingly, with but the faintest perceptible quivering of her crimson lips, and a somewhat defiant expression in her dark-gray eyes.

"Excuse me, Adine," he said, "if I urge this ques-

tion. I beg you will not misconstrue my motives. You know that I have the deepest reverence for your purity, and that I believe you to be as innocent as an angel. It is not that I am concerned upon your account that I speak, for I know that you have too great a regard for the laws of society, to admit a visitor to your room at this hour. But that man who came here on your bridal night, and whom Vayle saw, and who was seen a week ago by both Vayle and myself to descend from your window—the man who stole your star bracelet—that man might have been tempted by the darkness of your boudoir to enter and commit farther depredations. You looked so pale when I came in that the thought entered my mind that he might have come here to-night, found you sleeping, perhaps, and commenced a robbery which you awakened in time to interrupt!"

"You are fanciful, Eustace, in your explanation of a slight paleness. I am more often pale than flushed, you know. My thoughts might not have been very agreeable, and I dare say I spoke aloud. I frequently do so when my thoughts are disturbed."

Lord Roslyn was silenced, but his conviction that he had heard voices in the boudoir as in conversation was not shaken.

He endeavoured to fling off the disagreeable impression created by her ladyship's evasion of his questioning, stepped forward, closed and fastened the window, and drew the curtains together.

As he did so, Vayle Malvern, who until now had lingered under the windows, rode up to the great porch of the mansion.

Quitting the window, the earl returned to his bride with a sad look on his face, and said:

"Is my presence undesirable in your room, Adine?"

"Not at all, Eustace," she answered, assuming a smile. "I should like to hear you read."

"Not to-night. I don't feel in the humour for reading to-night, if you will excuse me from the task. Let us converse, Adine. Our honeymoon is half spent, and we do not seem to be nearly so well acquainted with each other as before our marriage."

He did not suspect the existence of the fearful secret, that had come between them like a gigantic and impassable barrier.

The young countess sank gracefully into her arm-chair, the earl seating himself near her, and replied, carelessly:

"I think you are right, Eustace. We are not so well acquainted with each other. Or, it may be we have learned so much of each other, that we now know how much remains to be learned. I suppose that neither you nor I can boast of a transparent character. We do not wear our hearts on our sleeves for daws to peck at."

"No, we do not!" declared the earl, with a sigh. "It seems to me, Adine," he added, with a passionate quiver running through his tones, "that you and I are as far asunder as the poles!"

"United, yet divided. Bound together in marriage, when either of us would give every farthing we own, if we could place ourselves where we stood three weeks ago!" responded the countess, her heart in her voice, and her face instinct with earnestness. "Few marriages have been more brilliant than ours; few have seemed to begin with a brighter sun of prosperity and happiness; and in few indeed has that sun set so quickly in a night of unending gloom!"

"Adine! Do you feel thus?" cried the earl, in astonishment, and with wounded feeling.

"We both feel thus, Eustace," she replied, bitterly. "Let us for once acknowledge the truth to ourselves. We may blind the world into believing us a model couple, loving and happy, but we surely need not hesitate to let fall the gay mask when we are alone. Since we cannot undo our bonds, let us at least be conscious of them!"

"Adine, you distress me!"

"Is it easier to bear the yoke in silence?"

It trembled upon the earl's tongue to tell her in reply to that demand how he had grown to love her; how his heart thrilled at every tone of her voice; how he admired her above all other women; how he did homage to her beauty and goodness; how he worshipped her with all his heart and soul, desiring nothing in all this world so much as to win her love in return.

In short, the story of his strong, passionate, enduring love for her struggled for utterance, and he longed to tell her that she was the "star of his destiny"—the star whose light for him could never wane.

But the words were not uttered.

The strange bitterness of the young countess warned him that they would not be well received, and he schooled himself to patience.

"If it were not that the affair would cause a lasting scandal," said Lady Roslyn, "I should propose that we separate—that you literally go your way and I go mine. You could then institute proceedings for a divorce on the ground that I had deserted you—"

"Never, never!" interrupted the earl, vehemently, his face becoming sterner than the young wife had ever seen it. "No, Adine, even if you hate me, that cannot be: I would never consent to such a step. While I live, if I can prevent it, scandal shall never busy herself with the name of Roslyn! If at any period there ever occurred family dissensions among any of my name, the world was never informed of them and made umpire, and I do not intend to make known my domestic unhappiness!"

"You need not fear that I shall, then," said the countess, with quiet resolution. "My pride is not less than your own, Eustace. Had it been less, or my regard for yours been weak, I should have quitted you and Roslyn Manor upon our bridal night, and never looked upon your face again!"

"And that on account of that fatal compact which I proposed and to which you acceded?"

Lady Roslyn had spoken unguardedly, her thoughts being busy with the enemy whom she had found that night making himself at home in her boudoir, and she now collected her thoughts, answering:

"No, Eustace, the compact was well enough. I was glad and relieved to hear you propose it, for I should never, perhaps, have summoned enough courage to say it myself. But I had begun to realize that we should not get on well together; that, in fact, we are unsuited to each other!"

The earl maintained a grave silence of some moments' duration, and his young wife reflected upon what he had said of his pride in his family, and shuddered to think what would be the consequences, if by any untoward event her secret should be blazoned forth to the world.

She looked up at his pale, stern face, timidly, with a vain wish that she might reveal to him the dread mystery preying upon her, and then she checked the wish with a sudden fear that her mind might be wandering.

To unveil her heart to him, she thought, would be like putting her head within the lion's jaws.

Lord Roslyn was the first to speak.

"Our conversation has been rather singular for a bride and bridegroom yet in their honeymoon, has it not, Adine?" he said, in a hoarse voice and with a ghastly smile.

"Yes, but frankness is best!" she answered.

"This state of affairs may not continue always, Adine. Some kind fate may give you relief from all that you now struggle against. We have been very frank with each other so far, and now I want to ask of you a continuation of your candidness. Tell me, Adine, that you will not be offended at a question I am about to ask you!"

"I promise!"

He fixed his eyes upon her with an intense and searching gaze, and his voice faltered as he said:

"As your husband, I have a right to ask it, but I do not forget that when I asked it once before, you gave me no satisfaction. Do you love Harold Bevan?"

The question, and the abruptness with which it was put, brought a faint, fluctuating colour to the cheeks of the young wife, but she raised her eyes to the gaze of the earl, replying, with plainly manifest truthfulness, and a quiet dignity:

"You should have known me better than to have asked such a question, Eustace. I do not love Harold Bevan. If I had loved him, I should not have married you!"

The earl's face shone with a sudden glow, and a look of thankfulness was apparent in his eyes, but the glow and look faded soon, and he asked:

"Adine, do you love any one?"

"No one in the world, but my brother, Hubert Sayton!" she answered, half-haughtily.

"Thank heaven, my wife!" he murmured, under his breath.

"I might ask why you put such singular questions, Eustace. I might refuse to answer them. In some moods, I suppose I should refuse. But I am sorry for you to-night, and sorry for myself!"

She spoke wearily, and put her hand to her face to shade its change of expression from the observant eyes of her husband.

It was her left arm, and, as she moved it, the lace under the sleeve of her evening dress fell back, displaying its softly rounded proportions, and the bracelet encircling it.

The earl started and bent forward with an eager look.

"Is that the star bracelet, Adine?" he asked.

Lady Roslyn started, having forgotten that she had regained possession of the valued ornament, and she extended her arm to him that he might examine it.

"It is indeed my mother's bracelet. Why, where did you find it, Adine? You did not wear it at dinner."

"I know I did not. I put it on since I came up this evening."

"But how did you recover it?"

"It was not lost at all, Eustace," she said, striving to speak lightly. "We have been too much troubled about it. Its disappearance was the result of a little carelessness on my part, and now that I have found it I shall be more careful of it!"

Roslyn was scarcely satisfied at his bride's non-communicativeness with regard to its recovery, and exclaimed:

"Then that fellow who came out of your window had stolen nothing! What could he have wanted here? Perhaps he took the bracelet and feared to keep it lest he should be discovered. Where did you say you found it?"

"I did not say, I believe. But I found it in this room. Would you like to look at it?"

To put an end to farther inquiries, she unclasped the ornament and laid it in his hand.

He looked at it, turning it over and over, regarding the peculiar form of the star and the peculiar brilliants composing it, and then looked at the narrow gold band, lining the inner part of the ornament.

He had had the initials of his bride engraved in a fanciful monogram upon that band, and he regarded them now, the letters so interwoven and entwined that they were almost undistinguishable, and looked as if engraved only for the farther enrichment of the gem.

He was about to replace the toy upon his young wife's arm, when he detected beside the monogram a neatly written word—a simple name, formed in the tiniest, but most regular and elegant characters.

It was the name of "Alix!"

And the way it happened to be there was this.

After Alix Erle had retired to her room with her treasures, the bracelet and shawl, upon the evening of her birthday, she had spent a full hour in holding the jewel to the light, watching the flashing of its varied colours, and making herself familiar with its beauty. It had seemed to her the embodiment of untold riches, and a sudden fear had come over her that she might accidentally lose it, and be unable to identify it fully to the satisfaction of the person who might find it. She had observed the monogram within, but considered it as simply an adornment of the ornaments. So she had taken a tiny steel sharp-pointed instrument that lay in her work-box, and had scratched her name very neatly upon the gold—thus setting upon it the seal of her ownership.

"What is this, Adine?" exclaimed the earl. "Here is the name Alix. It looks as if meant for Alix, but that is such an odd name, it can hardly have been intended for it. It can't be Alix!"

"Let me look," returned the young wife, her hand trembling as she took the bracelet and held it to the light.

The faint scratch was very perceptible to her, and danced up and down before her eyes, as she in vain strove to render her hand steady.

"It does look like Alix," she said, almost frightened by the discovery. "It is odd it should remind you of such a singular name. I never heard it before. Alix! Ah, yes, I have seen that name. It used to be a great favourite among the Saxons, did it not? And it is occasionally met with here in England now. It's a pretty name. I wonder almost how you formed it out of the name Adine."

"Did you scratch it in there? And is it intended for Adine?" eagerly inquired the earl.

Lady Roslyn would not stain her soul by an untruth, but her cheeks burned and a guilty feeling rendered her uneasy, as she evaded the question, saying, lightly:

"Should I be likely to write any name but my own there, Eustace? The initial is plain enough, if the remainder of the name is involved in obscurity."

The earl looked at the faint tracing again, endeavouring to form out of it the name of his young wife, but it required a strong effort of the imagination to transform that plain Alix into Adine.

With a sigh, he clasped the bracelet about Lady Roslyn's arm.

He was conscious that she had evaded all his questions with regard to its recovery and the name within it, and felt certain that it had been made the subject of some experiences with which he was not to be made acquainted.

Suspicious obtruded themselves upon his mind that she might have given it to her mysterious visitant of her bridal night, and since demanded its return, but he dismissed them as unworthy of consideration. He could not cherish a thought that would reflect upon the honour and truthfulness of his young wife.

"Adine, my wife!" he said, softly, dwelling upon the name that announced her relationship to him, as if it possessed the sweetest sound in all the world to him. "You must know that the mystery that has grown up around you, since the hour we entered Roslyn Manor together is very apparent to me. You must know that the man who left your room, by way of the tree close to your window, has been almost

proved not to have been a robber or thief, since nothing is missing; it looks odd, therefore, that he should have been here at all. The last time, the time when I beheld him, he must have left your very presence, for you told me you had scarcely left this room. You must know, too, that the disappearance of this bracelet, and its return, and the name of Alix within it, have not been satisfactorily explained by you. Will you explain these things to me?"

There was a gentle tone of command, very perceptible through the softness of his voice, compelling an answer, and the young countess forced herself to speak, though her face was without colour, and her voice trembling.

"You have made out a formidable case against me, Eustace," she said. "Yet I can explain nothing. Not even to retain your good opinion. Consider any excuses or evasions I have made as unsaid."

"Look up at me, Adine."

She obeyed his tone of gentle authority.

He held her hands in his and looked down into her eyes, which were like wells of light, as he had done once before. He looked keenly, steadfastly, as though he would read her soul, and when he had finished his scrutiny, a smile played over his stern mouth, and a radiant look of love lighted up his dark countenance.

"Adine, my wife!" he said, again, more softly than before, looking tenderly upon the glittering head now bowed before him, "whatever this mystery may be enshrouding you, I know you have done no wrong. In the face of everything against you, I trust in you. If you will not give me your confidence, my faith in you shall yet be undisturbed."

His look of love died out, and was succeeded by one of bitter grief that his passion for her was unreturned, and he arose that he might retire to his study to indulge in his sorrow unseen.

As he gained the door he looked back to encounter a grateful look from her, and he then withdrew, while she murmured:

"I had no idea Eustace was so grand and noble! He looked to me then like one of those stately heroes of whom I have read. Mrs. Adrian ought to be happy in having won such a heart!"

CHAPTER XX.

I would bring balm, and pour it in your wound,
Cure your disordered mind, and heal your fortunes.
Dryden.

We have described the visit of Count Lechelle, otherwise Rellen Polack, to the youthful Lady Roslyn, a week subsequent to the death of his mother, but will resume our narrative of the events transpiring at Anerly Lodge at the point at which we left it.

The rector offered every consolation suggested by a warm heart and a vital religious faith to the bereaved children of the deceased lady, and he was ably seconded by his good wife, who had long cherished a motherly partiality for the brown-eyed Alix. They succeeded in comforting the maiden, and subduing her wild grief to a tender regret, but whether Rellen even heard them was not apparent from his manner.

He liked, however, to see that holy look on the bright young face of his betrothed, and that patient smile of resignation upon her lips. Guileful and evil-minded as he was, he not only respected the purity and innocence of his betrothed, but he actually loved her the better for them. They were to him like the down upon the coveted peach, the rich bloom upon the unsunned grape, and even her quiet and unobtrusive religion was an added beauty in his sight, a sort of setting which served the better to display her physical and mental loveliness.

"Have you thought what you shall do, dear?" asked the rector's wife, at length, with a sort of maternal tenderness in her regard of Alix.

"I—I don't understand!" stammered the maiden, arousing herself from a momentary abstraction.

"It is soon to think of your future, Alix, but your plans will require to be settled upon before Mr. Polack's departure to town!"

"They are settled upon, Mrs. Stone," said Rellen, putting one arm around his young betrothed in a protecting manner. "We were discussing them at the moment of your arrival. Alix will remain at the Lodge as its mistress, while I devote myself to my business in town. She will retain her present household, and engage an elderly lady as a sort of protectress!"

"But she is so young, Mr. Polack!"

"There is as much wisdom in her little head as many women have at twice her age," declared the young man. "Besides, if she need farther protection, she can at any moment telegraph to me!"

The rector's wife looked grave.

"I must say that I don't quite like your plan, Mr. Polack," she said. "You will pardon my frankness, for I was your mother's most intimate friend.

Do you intend that she shall remain here as mistress of the Lodge until she marries, or you bring home a bride?"

"I intend that she shall always be mistress here, for she has promised to become my wife. It was my mother's dearest wish that Alix and I should marry. We love each other, and purpose being married in six months—that is in January of the coming year!"

The rector's wife looked from the proud, happy face of the young man to the blushing, confused countenance of the maiden, and confessed to herself that the projected marriage would not be unsuitable, and that they would be a very handsome couple.

"In six months, you said, Mr. Polack," she remarked, meditatively. "The marriage could not well be sooner, and you do well to wait. I visited Mrs. Polack the other day, and she then confided to me many particulars with regard to Alix's history, and told me of the recent visit of her guardian. Is there not danger that he may discover Mrs. Polack's death, and return, taking advantage of your absence?"

Rellen's brow clouded.

"There is such danger," he said, "but Alix will have Michael always at hand, and I can be telegraphed to at once. Her guardian would hardly think of carrying her away against her will, especially as she would be guarded by her servants. No. It is best she should remain. Besides, I have no other home at present to offer her!"

The last sentence decided the question.

The rector's wife was not convinced that it would be either safe or proper for Alix to remain under the roof of her betrothed during the period of their engagement, but as she was unable to offer her a home, and as the maiden had no known relatives, she forbore to urge her objections.

"At least," she said, "a lady should be engaged as soon as possible to take in part the place of your poor mother, Mr. Polack. If you and Alix desire it," she added, "I will remain at the Lodge for a week, until after the funeral shall have taken place and arrangements been fully made."

This kind offer was gratefully accepted by both Alix and her lover, and Mrs. Stone laid aside her bonnet and shawl, while her husband arose and signified his intention to depart.

He was a benevolent-looking old man, and there was something almost patriarchal in his aspect, as he laid his hand upon the head of the maiden and invoked a blessing upon her, that should cheer her in her present sorrow and remain with her throughout her life.

He then shook hands with Rellen, and left the house, proceeding to the gate, where his horse was still standing, his every movement followed by the kindly glances of his aged wife.

When his pony-chaise had rattled away in a homeward direction, Mrs. Stone turned to Alix, and said: "You look worn out, my dear. I thought, when I saw you yesterday, that you were quite exhausted. Let me send you to bed for a few hours. You have no idea, Mr. Polack," the good lady added, "how entirely Alix has devoted herself to her aunt during her illness!"

The maiden looked up inquiringly into her lover's face, and he withdrew his arm from her waist, saying:

"Yes, Alix, you need sleep. Go up to your room, my love!"

He pressed her hand tenderly, and she departed, hastening up to her own chamber.

It was a pretty room, across the corridor from the chamber in which Mrs. Polack had died, and it had a cosy home-look, and a pleasant coolness very grateful to the tired maiden on that warm morning. The floor was covered with Indian matting, of a pale straw colour; the furniture was of a pretty light wood, with open-work bamboo seats; the curtains were of white muslin, looped up with crimson ribbons; the white walls were adorned with water-colour drawings; and some prettily carved hanging shelves were laden with choice books.

In a small recess separated from the little sitting-room by a pair of folding doors, and lighted by a small round window, was a white-covered couch, half-hidden by flowing muslin curtains.

To this quiet nook, Alix retired, and her curly head had scarcely touched her pillow when she fell into a refreshing, dreamless sleep, which lasted until early evening.

When she awakened at last, her first emotion was a painful sense of bereavement, she found her sitting-room lighted by a solar lamp, over which was placed a painted shade. A little table had been placed by her bedside, and as she lifted her head languidly, the rector's wife came into the recess, bearing a small tray laden with tempting food, which she deposited upon the table.

"You must eat, my dear," she said, as Alix shook

her head. "I came up to see if you had awakened, and have been sitting by your window for some time. Mr. Polack just brought up this tray, with a request that you would eat something and then dress for dinner. You know, love," she added, sympathizingly, "that the death of one friend cannot absolve us from our duties to those who survive. I think that Mr. Polack bears up under his affliction remarkably well, but, of course, no one knows how much he suffers at heart. If you could fling off your grief, and be cheerful, and make the Lodge seem home-like, I am sure it would be a great comfort to him."

"I will!" exclaimed Alix, flinging back her matted curls from her pale, sad face, which now glowed with resolution. "I did not forget that he mourns for his mother. She was nearer to him than to me, and yet I feel as though I had lost my nearest and dearest friend."

She repressed her sobs, and lifted the cup of steaming coffee, which Mrs. Stone had just poured out for her, to her lips.

While she ate and drank, the rector's wife retreated to the sitting-room, and soon went down to the drawing-room, where Rellen Polack was seated in gloomy solitude.

Her repast finished, Alix arose and attired herself for dinner.

She looked very beautiful when she had perfected her toilette, her short, loose curls surrounding her tropical face like a feathery cloud, yet drawn away from her forehead by a slender crescent-shaped band of gold. Her child-like figure was robed in a thin white muslin dress, that terminated at the feet in a broad hem, and at the slender throat in a frill of white lace. Her neck and shoulders were, therefore, half-concealed by their covering of filmy muslin, and her arms gleamed through the loose sleeves of her robe. Her only ornament was her diamond ring of betrothment.

Although her attire was faultless, she had paid little attention to it, and went down to the drawing-room quite unconscious of the charming effect she had produced.

As she opened the door, Rellen Polack arose and came forward courteously to meet her, his gaze expressing his admiration.

"I am glad you have not thought it necessary to put on black, Alix," he said. "I do not like this advertising to the world one's grief, and black is a hideous colour."

As he was her betrothed husband, his will was law to Alix, and she cheerfully acceded to his wish.

The evening passed with far more cheerfulness than might have been expected, and Alix and Rellen found a mournful pleasure in conversing about their loved one, in recalling her many noble virtues, and in eulogizing the fortitude with which she had borne alone the knowledge and the agony of her disease.

That evening was a type of the days and evenings that followed for a week. Alix continued to be cheerful and self-forgetful when with others, and in the morning her brown eyes showed little trace of the tears she had shed when alone.

Relatives of Mrs. Polack and her late husband gathered at the funeral, but they departed as they had come, with a few expressions of sympathy for the bereaved son, and some glances of curiosity at the young girl, who was regarded by them as an adopted niece of the deceased Mrs. Polack.

By the end of the week after the death of Mrs. Polack, affairs had slid naturally into their olden grooves at Anerly Lodge, and Rellen, who began to fear that Lady Roslyn would suffer annoyance at his delay in returning the bracelet, declared that he could no longer remain at home.

"I am sure I don't know what to do," he said, as the rector's wife, Alix, and he, were seated in the drawing-room, in the morning, with the door-like windows opened to admit the fresh air from the garden. "My business demands my immediate return to town. In fact, when I came up here, a week ago, I had made arrangements only for a night's stay."

"Why do you not go back at once, Rellen?"

"I don't see how I am to leave you, Alix. It will not do to leave you unprotected, and no duenna has been obtained for you yet. Mrs. Stone will go home to-day. I dare not ask her to remain longer, lest the rector blame me. I do not want to break up our home at the Lodge, so you see I am in a great strait."

"From which I can relieve you, Mr. Polack," said good Mrs. Stone, with a smile. "My husband received a letter last night, begging him to visit his younger brother, who lives down on the south-coast, and he has resolved to accept the invitation. I am not strong enough to travel, and have decided to remain at home. Mr. Stone will go to-day and be absent a week or so; if you wish, I will stay at the Lodge during his absence."

"A thousand thanks, Mrs. Stone," exclaimed the young man. "This offer is most timely. I shall feel quite safe about Alix if you will remain with her."

"In addition to remaining, I will endeavour to procure for her an elderly companion," remarked the rector's wife.

Rellen was greatly relieved by this promise, and expressed his gratification, adding:

"I wish you would be a friend and mother to my little Alix, Mrs. Stone. Of course, as she is my promised wife, it would not look well for me to be at home much during the six months that must elapse before our marriage. It is best that my visits to her be brief and not frequent, unless my presence should be necessary."

"You are right, Mr. Polack," declared Mrs. Stone. "I wanted to speak to you upon this subject, but I should not have ventured to do so if you had not broached it. There can be no objection to frequent letters, but it seems to me that you should not come home oftener than once a month."

"Once a month, be it, then," said Rellen, with some dissatisfaction, yet acquiescing in the wisdom of the arrangement. "I suppose it is time for me to be off now?"

He looked at his watch; Mrs. Stone stepped out into the garden, and walked among the flowers.

A few minutes remained to the young couple, and Rellen improved them by advising his betrothed with regard to her daily life in his absence, warning her against making any acquaintances, and reminding her of her promise to write to him daily. He assured her that, on mature reflection, he did not believe her mysterious guardian would ever again molest her, as he evidently desired to remain unrecognized by her. He told her of his love for her, and bade her ever remember that she was bound to him by the most solemn promises.

It seemed as if he feared that something might come between them to separate them.

"And have no fears, Alix," he concluded, straining her to his breast, and kissing her brow. "Do not lose my address. You know you can summon me at any moment. And now, my darling, my almost wife, I must say good-bye."

He kissed her again with fervency, and then quitted the room.

A few minutes later he left the house, followed by Michael, who carried his carpet-bag.

He stopped near the gate to shake hands with Mrs. Stone and to thank her for her kindness, which he begged her to continue to his young betrothed, and then he passed into the road, and set out at a quick pace towards the village.

From the moment of his departure a change came over Alix.

The house seemed strange and unhomelike to her. She could not bear to sit in the drawing-room where Mrs. Polack's days had been spent, and she felt more keenly now than at first the great loss she had experienced.

The library became her place of refuge, and the rector's wife sat with her there, conversing and reading aloud, but though Alix was grateful for her kindness and forced herself to be cheerful, good Mrs. Stone saw plainly that the young girl was drooping.

She noticed how slow her step was, how unnaturally bright her large brown eyes were, how thin her face had grown, and a conviction forced itself upon her mind that something should be done to check this growing despondency.

"She ought to have change of scene," she concluded, mentally. "She is continually reminded of her lost friend here. If she could do as Rellen does, go out into the world for a brief time, it would be beneficial to her. I think she could lead a different life for a little while, have different companionship, and see different things. I must see if something cannot be done."

But nothing suggested itself. Alix had no friends whom she could visit, and her presence would not have been desirable in the homes of the late Mrs. Polack's relatives. It only remained to be patient and hopeful.

The rector departed on his visit, and the pony-chaise was employed every day by Mrs. Stone in driving with Alix about the country. They made calls upon every spinster and widow in the neighbourhood, with a view to filling the vacant position of protectress to the maiden, but the representatives of either class were few in number in that vicinity, and none of them proved eligible. A few were independent and preferred their own homes to that of another, and others who were willing to go to Anerly Lodge did not possess the peculiar qualifications deemed necessary by the rector's wife.

"I am sure I had no idea. It was such difficult work to find the sort of person we want," said Mrs. Stone, one afternoon, as they sat at the library win-

dow. "There's Miss Mills, who can talk of nothing save the disappointment she had forty years ago. Of course, she wouldn't do. Then Miss Parks can talk of nothing but the offers of marriage she has had and how she hates mankind. Mr. Polack would not approve of her. Miss Nelson paints her face and affects a juvenility which renders her ridiculous. The widow Gray is so taciturn that she will not even reply when spoken to. I fear we shall have to give up in despair. Had you not better tell Mr. Polack in your letter to-morrow that our search has been unsuccessful?"

"I think I will do so!" answered Alix, whose head was pillowed on her hand, and who was looking out into the garden.

The rector's wife looked at her with pitying sadness, and said:

"Had you not better go out into the open air, my dear? A brisk walk up and down the garden will bring the colour to your pale cheeks. I want to see you looking like yourself again!"

Alix smiled faintly, and arose. As she did so, she observed a handsome carriage, with coachmen in livery, stopping in front of the little gate, and a sudden fear came over her that her guardian might have returned to carry her away.

She caught hold of her chair for support, expressing her fear to her friend.

Mrs. Stone endeavoured to reassure her, and, while she was speaking, a lady descended from the vehicle, and walked up the garden walk, to the front door.

Soon after, the servant announced that a lady was waiting in the drawing-room, who desired to see Mrs. Stone, at the same time handing the rector's wife the card of the visitor.

"Lady Alden!" said the good lady, as she glanced at the card. "You see, my dear, that your fears were unnecessary. This lady is a friend and former schoolmate of mine. We were educated at the same convent in Paris, and our friendship has never declined, although our worldly stations are widely different. But go out into the garden, dear, while I entertain my friend."

She left the room, and Alix, blushing at the mistake she had made, caught up her hat and went into the garden.

"I might have known that he would not come in such a carriage as that," she thought. "He is very probably poor, and glad to be rid of the expense of my support. But we receive so few visitors that, on seeing the arrival, my first thought was of him!"

She walked slowly down the shaded walk to the bottom of the garden, and turned into a secluded path that led to a thicket bordering the hedge. It had been a favourite spot with her, but, as she now approached it, she stopped abruptly, and retreated to the depths of the shrubbery, with a pale, frightened face and an exclamation of terror.

She had seen a man's head looking out from the thicket towards the Lodge, with an unwavering gaze; a head which, by its profuse red wig and long, sandy beard, green spectacles and high colour, she recognized as that of her mysterious guardian.

"He must have heard of Aunt Lettice's death," thought the maiden. "Why is he hiding here? Can he intend harm to me?"

In a panic of alarm, she continued to watch him, but, finally assured that he had not seen her, she crept away from the scene, being careful to keep within the shadow of the bushes, and fled towards the dwelling.

(To be continued.)

WITH proper boat and harbour arrangements, and with the opening of the new South Eastern line to Tunbridge, the daily mail service between London and Paris could be performed in about eight hours and thirty-five minutes.

THE following return of the offensive and defensive weapons which France has at her command is not without interest:—9,173 bronze cannon, 2,774 cannon obusier, 3,210 bronze mortars, 3,921 bronze obusiers, 18,778,549 iron balls, 1,712,574 chassapots, 10,268,986 kilogrammes of powder, 4,998,668 bombs. It is needless to remark that every cannon is in order, every gun new, every grain of powder dry, and every bullet perfect.

SPRIS OF WAR.—The presents from the army in Abyssinia to the Queen have reached their final destination. They consist of three crowns or headpieces, a robe of state, a goblet, seal, trappings, &c. One of the crowns seems made entirely of solid gold—quite plain, in the shape of a Papal tiara; its base surrounded at intervals by three bars of embossed gold. The second, also gold, with a velvet cap, looks much like an English coronet, a little the worse for wear. The third is a kind of martial headpiece, with a metal top, and loose metal bars hanging down at intervals all round it as far as the neck. The

robe is a very magnificent affair, looking as if fresh from the loom, woven apparently of rich gold thread, with large patterns of flowers about it woven of silk in appropriate colours. This was the robe which Theodore threw off just before he put an end to his life. The goblet is also of gold, but less capacious than its owner's powers of imbibing would have led one to expect. The seal of gold bears a lion passant, and the handle is made of three large pieces of agate, each of a different colour. Singularly enough, the case that held it bears the name of a well-known firm in Pall-mall. The other articles were rich or curious in their way.

WHAT IS THE SARDINE?

I THINK we may consider that the question, "What is the Sardine?" is now satisfactorily determined; for our two greatest living authorities are agreed respecting it. In consequence of some correspondence which I had with that celebrated ichthyologist, Mr. Couch, in the autumn of last year, I had the pleasure of procuring for him this spring some sardines from the Mediterranean and other localities, and he kindly permits me to publish the results of his examination of them. Writing on the 8th of May respecting those from Marseilles and Cassis, he says:—

"I have now the pleasure of thanking you for the sardines, and of reporting the fruits of an attentive examination of them in comparison with the pilchards. I may venture to say that I wished to detect some mark of distinction between these fishes, since it seemed scarcely possible to suppose that where habits were so different the resemblance could be great. Yet on a very close study of the sardines, I am not able to discover wherein they differ, except indeed in relative magnitude. An important point in the pilchard is the marking of the gill-covers, and especially the arrangement of the diverging lines of the posterior plate, but these correspond in both fishes; and although, in about half the number of the examples you were so kind as to send me, there was an additional line above the row of five descending channels, which line is decidedly black, with dividing branches in pairs proceeding from it, yet these seem to be only blood-vessels that disappear after a time, without leaving a trace of their existence. Their presence in some and not in others may be characteristic of sex, but I cannot suppose that it is a mark of difference of species. After all, these sardines are only an inferior kind of pilchard, and yet does it not seem strange that with (I suppose) a finer climate and abundance of food, they do not attain to a quarter of the bulk of the Cornish pilchard?"

On the 12th of May I forwarded to Mr. Couch some pilchards of various sizes, which I had purchased the day before as sardines, in the fish market of the Halles Centrales, Paris, and which I ascertained had been taken off Cape Finisterre. On the 18th he kindly sent me the following report on them:—

"The fish have arrived, and I have closely examined them without being able to discover any difference between them and our common pilchards. I had procured an example of the latter for comparison, and therefore am compelled to believe that they are specifically the same. The small specimens are much smaller than we are accustomed to see, and even the larger would be considered as less than our own fishermen would generally approve of; but this seems to me to be all the difference. Pilchards, when dying, often show the distribution of blood-vessels round the eyes and on the cheeks more distinctly than in the herring, and I find the same in the larger examples from Paris. It is not seen in the smaller fishes. It appears remarkable that situation should establish such great difference of magnitude, and, in some degree, of habit in fish of the same species, as it appears to have done in this instance: for I must regard it as a fact that the sardine and the pilchard are only varieties of the same species. But I have just now been conversing with an intelligent fisherman, and he informs me that whiting caught in one district within his local knowledge are little beyond half the size of those of another. Crabs of the same size caught within five miles will not obtain the same price by a few shillings the dozen. These men, fishing with lines, have selected spots in the sea, which they term marks; and although the kinds of fish may be the same, there are often small differences by which it becomes known where certain fish have been caught. If, therefore, a boat comes to our market with a large 'catch,' other observers will presently know where success is to be obtained, and they hasten away to share in it. All this, and more that I may communicate at some future time, is proof that there are oceanic fish that do not wander far from their accustomed haunts."

The sardine and the pilchard, then, are, in the opinion of Mr. Couch (no mere chamber naturalist), one and the same fish under different conditions; and Dr. Gunther expressed a similar opinion at the last meeting of the Zoological Society. H. L.



[JANE'S DESPERATE ADVENTURES.]

OCTAVIA'S PRIDE.

BY THE

Author of "Captain Frisky," "Leaves of Fate," &c.

CHAPTER IX.

"Now," said Jane West, "if I have any woman's wit I must find it. Here I am locked in my room, three stories up from the ground, and below are those two men, cruel, wicked creatures, inebriated, with the worst of all intoxication, the maddened thirst for gold. This is only the commencement of my persecution. No one can say to what lengths they may push it, and I am here alone, a single, weaponless woman to defend myself against two men with the advantages all on their side. Of course I am justified in using strategy, and I am at perfect liberty to depart. My master, who alone had the power of controlling my actions, lies dead, woe is me! and has no farther need of me, except for this thing—to save that packet from those prying eyes and greedy hands. I will do it; just now I do not see the way, but the knowledge will come. And they shall not obtain from me the cordial recipe, no, not if they stretch me on a rack and torture me to obtain a single hint."

She went to the window, and looked out sharply and scrutinizingly. The distance to the ground did not daunt her. She was confident that she could manufacture a rope to let her down safely. But the question was, how to get into the lower story without arousing anyone, and to get also to the inside of Doctor Morley's secretaire.

The one under-servant belonging to the establishment was a new woman, only a short time out from serving a sentence for theft, who had only been there a month. Ah! if old Martha were only back again it would have been easily managed. But Martha had gone home to die, and be buried among her kindred.

Sore as was her need of the faithful old creature's co-operation, Jane could not find heart to regret the fact, and her eye moistened, remembering whose thoughtful care had sent the poor creature home. The present woman without doubt would be easily moulded to the new master's will. Yes, it was very certain she must rely entirely upon herself.

Jane West did not weep and moan, and bewail her hard fate. She did not sink down weak and helpless, nor faint away, nor employ any of the other useless and pitiable methods, by which a certain style of distressed damsels meet such an exigency. She set her lips together a little more restlessly, the hazel

eye dried off the tears of grieved affection, and shone firm and steady.

"It must be done," said she, "and I must do it."

Then, under cover of the curtain, she put out her head and looked carefully over the wall of the house. In a moment the light she asked for broke upon her. She smiled triumphantly.

"I can lower myself to the ground, then I can climb up to the great tin water-spout, and get upon the roof, the trap-door there is never locked, and I can get through that into the house. Just after midnight will be the time. I wish I had taken dinner. I need to be strong and steady. I wonder if they intend to starve me?"

She went to the door, began knocking loudly and persistently, and, as she anticipated, the disturbance brought one of her gaolers in great haste.

"What are you doing? What are you making this confounded noise for?" demanded the new master, indignantly, from the top of the stairs; "if you don't want to be put in narrower quarters yet, you had best be quiet."

"I wish to ask you by what authority you restrain the liberty of an innocent person? I can demand the protection of the governor. I have taken no food to-day, and you have locked me in here where I can obtain none," was the reply in quiet, but resolute tones.

"She is a tartar," muttered Mr. Aaron Morley, and went down the stairs again.

Jane guessed that he had left her to her fate, and began knocking again. She was not surprised therefore at sounds of his return. He unlocked the door, took a tray of food from the hands of the servant who had accompanied him, brought it in, and put it on her table.

"There is food," said he. "I would like to treat you well, if you would let me. Come girl, be reasonable. This recipe is my right, and I ought to have it. It is ridiculous in you to refuse me. Should you attempt to make your own fortune out of it, I shall straightway bring an action against you."

"I told you, sir, that Doctor Morley especially instructed me that no fortune should ever be made from it. I shall never use it, unless such an unlikely thing as becoming rich should allow me to do so. Then I would come back to Sydney, make the cordial, and give it, as he has done, for the poor and suffering."

"Meantime, as you are not rich, the sick people must go without it," said he, restraining for the time the expression of his anger.

He saw the look of distress on her face, brought

there by this new suggestion, and followed up the advantage.

"Yes, think of all the poor creatures you condemn to suffering, possibly to death, by this foolish and obstinate whim. How dare you be so cruel and inhuman?"

Jane looked down, perplexed for a moment. Would it be right, after all? The poor people had better pay their hard-earned money for it, rather than not have it at all. Suddenly there came to her, so suddenly that it seemed like a whisper from an invisible presence, the remembrance of a day when Doctor Morley and she had been filling bottles with the precious cordial.

"Jenny Wren," said the doctor, "do you know if you were assistant doctor anywhere else you would be putting in cunning adulterations here, and weakening there, and resorting to all those miserable subterfuges which lessen the cost of an article of merchandize, and thus add to the profit? So artful and dishonest is this poor human nature of ours, when once it is clutched in the evil grasp of Mammon. Child, child, you do not know this poor, tricky world of ours. I verily believe not one man in a hundred who undertook to make our cordial, but would spoil its virtue, in trying to make it profitable."

This man before her was just one of those who woke the scorn of that noble soul. In his hands the cordial would degenerate, become the imposition Doctor Morley had hated.

Jane looked up, no longer irresolute.

The man thought he had conquered, and a glow brightened his face, but the fierce scowl came back before her sentence was finished.

"I have no right to depart from Doctor Morley's instructions. I would cut off my hand before I would let it write that recipe for you."

"It may be cut off without your help," muttered the baffled heir. "I tell you I have a right to the recipe, and you shall give it to me."

And he closed the door, against which he had planted himself, locked it once more, and went down to his confederate.

Jane sat down to her dinner, and ate heartily, after a somewhat scrutinizing examination of the food. After that she set herself to work, and with the aid of scissors, needle, and thread, and an unscrupulous resort to the blankets of her bed, she had manufactured a rope strong enough to bear twice her weight.

She rolled it up with a sigh of satisfaction, and concealed it under the coverlet, murmuring as she put it to bed tenderly:

"Lie there till midnight, then you must be the wings to give poor Jenny Wren her freedom."

Next she made up a little bundle, and packed it into a small carpet-bag as compactly as possible, and when that was done, she looked over her little stock of money, and carefully reckoned up the amount due for her demand upon the bank. She blessed again the generous care which had always laid her wages every Saturday night into her own hand. It amounted to a larger sum than she expected. She felt rich, and exclaimed joyfully:

"I can go where I please, to England first, to deliver the package, and afterwards whither my heart has yearned to go, believing that there a free and generous welcome awaits everyone in whatever path they choose to win their bread. I can do both, and not be dependant upon charity, though I do not find work promptly."

And then Jane West, as the darkness gathered, went about looking up little tokens of remembrance to take with her upon this long and untried journey she was planning. First, there was the little covered box, filled with odd trinkets, some of wood, some of bone and ivory, but all the work of loving hands, which had soled many an otherwise dreary hour, and wrought for her alone. They were her father's gifts to a little child, but were more precious to Jane West than diamond and gold ornaments, or love gifts, to many other maidens. Doctor Morley had taken pains to show to her the great anguish of her father's heart, and his deep affection for his motherless little one, and that deathbed in the hospital held a halo for the lonely woman, beyond many a proud noble's coronet. She kissed the box as she packed it away. Then she turned to a stand well filled with books; those had been presented to her by Doctor Morley. She hung over them with yearning tenderness. She could only take a few. Which should be left behind? Alas! it was like a mother trying to select from her children which should be given away. She took them down, replaced them, sighed, well nigh cried over the task, finally shut her eyes, and selected thus blindly half-a-dozen. She hurried them into the carpet-bag, without looking at them.

"I will not know which I have taken until I am safely away. And now what else?"

Ah, there was the envelope in her drawer, a yellow one containing papers, copies of documents which proved her to be the legitimate daughter of one Robert West, and his wife, Ann Thurston West. She sighed as she put the envelope into her Bible, remembering the care Doctor Morley had taken to search them out from the badly kept records, and his charge for her to keep them choicely, since who could tell what might happen that she should need them?

At last all was done. She sat down wearily by the window, saw when the two men went out into the garden, and looked up curiously towards her window, probably to see if it were lighted.

"I can afford to sleep three hours at least," she thought, "it will not do to waste any strength in unnecessary wakefulness."

And she went obediently to the couch, and lay down. It was easier to assume the attitude, than to obtain sleep. The brain was so wide awake, with new and startling projects, the heart was so stirred from its accustomed calm, that at the best she only dozed.

The clock in the hall below rang out the hours into her wakeful ear, and as it struck two, Jane West slipped noiselessly from the bed, caught her breath, not nervously, but with a deep inspiration, as if to obtain all possible strength, and crept on.

The window was open as it had been all day. She glided softly to the chair, and leaning out examined carefully, to see if there were any ray of light to be discovered anywhere. All was dark and silent. The small carpet bag was on the other chair, the rope already knotted to the bedstead. The two windows below were fortunately belonging to rooms unlikely to be occupied. Her worst apprehension was the noise she would be likely to make, in swinging herself over the casement. She had provided a shorter rope to fasten about her waist to steady herself by. She knotted it carefully, and tied the carpet bag to her back. Everything was ready, and still all was silence. Jane paused, and covered her face with her hands, not in weakness or terror, but to breathe a short prayer for heaven's help. That done, she swung boldly out, seized her rope with one hand, steadying herself into the right position with the other, and when she was sure of herself, she cut the support away, and slipped downwards, touching as lightly as possible against the wall of the house. All was done in her steady, calculating way. She stood safely on the ground, and listened. No stir except the wind in the boughs of the Cape Pines, whispering to them of the strange doings below.

Thus far she was safe. She might fly now if she would, and no harm could come. Did the temptation come to leave the mysterious box to its fate?

Not for an instant. Doctor Morley was in Jane West's thoughts all the time she was doing this. Two Doctor Morleys, one pale, earnest, eager, telling her how this secret of his must be saved from meddlesome hands, and one cold and still, with closed eyes, silent lips, and powerless limbs. He trusted it to her. Cost what it might, Jenny Wren meant it should be done.

She crept around the house towards the great water-spout. Fate was kind to her; the spout was held to its place by stout tin rings, with flanges nailed to the house. She mounted upon the first without difficulty, and exploring upwards with her hand, discovered there was another within her reach. Jane West gave her blessing to the artisan who had taken so much pains to secure the spout to the building, and vaguely wondered if it were not more a providential accident, than because that corner of the building was exposed to the strong winds, which were sometimes nearly hurricanes. At all events they made an upright ladder by which she drew herself safely to the top. The roof was flat, and in the dim light she saw the trap-door half opened. She crept softly to it and slipped through, holding her very breath as she descended the stairs. At the foot of the short flight she sat down to rest, and removed her shoes from her feet, putting them in the carpet bag still strapped upon her shoulders. She felt in her pocket for the taper she had taken care to provide. All safe. Thus far everything had progressed favourably, but the most difficult task was yet to come, to pass the doors behind which those men slept, and one she guessed occupied Doctor Morley's old room, which opened from the office, as it was always called, where the doctor had received his patients, and pursued his studies, and into the latter apartment her errand led her.

She sat there in the darkness, pale, but not trembling, or faint-hearted. She went over her contemplated movements thoughtfully, and decided that the first must be to unbolt the street door to the office, so that in case of a surprise she might have all possible means of escape.

She said her little childish prayer for help also, and then she rose, and softly and stealthily crept down into the second story. One of her foes at least was safely out of her way—his loud snoring came through the thick doorway at regular intervals, like the ticking of a clock. On she sped, and descended the next flight. There was her danger. She had an instinctive consciousness that the heir kept in close proximity to the papers and effects in Doctor Morley's room.

Her brave heart began to beat now, in quicker pulsations, but she laid her hand firmly on the knob of the door. A sense of the change in all things came over her; how often and often her hand had known that contact, as she had gone in and out from Doctor Morley's kindly presence, and it almost seemed that the senseless metal must know she was taking now her final leave. Did her steady hand tremble at last? The door creaked sharply. She leaned silently against it, all her faculties merged into one, listening for the slightest sound or stir.

Once her heart gave a desperate leap. She thought someone moved in the room beyond, but as there came no renewal of the sound, she said to herself it was only her imagination. Then she crept into the room.

The room of all the house impregnated, saturated, pervaded with Doctor Morley. She did not need a light to know its looks; oh, how deeply every minutest object was imprinted on her memory! There, in the centre of the room, was the long table, on one end the case of surgical instruments, and the tray of writing materials at the other. There were the two bookcases, solid to the ceiling, with row upon row of books, many of them rare and costly, and not one among them light or trivial; and the great case with glass doors, every shelf filled with vials and powders, stood between the windows. And there was the great globe in its brass stand, and the array of philosophical and chemical apparatus, and the mounted skeleton keeping grim guard against the secretaire. Everything was so familiar, so much more beautiful to Jenny Wren than the costliest drawing-room in the land. It cut to her heart with a terrible pang to realize, as she did fully and entirely, that she had no more part in it, that it was an empty shell from which the living principle had flown. But it was not the time to bewail now.

Softly as a fairy she stole across the room, and laid her hand on the secretaire. The key was in the door, which saved her a little time, though she had provided a duplicate, which the master of the secretaire had trusted to her care a year ago. She turned it softly and cautiously, opened the door and explored with her hand within. Everything had been disarranged, but she was seeking for a little ivory knob, ostensibly there to hang the diary on, but really the cover of a spring which disclosed the secret drawer. Doctor Morley had taught her how it operated,

and it was there, she knew, the mysterious package which was to be saved from careless hands, and carried by herself to its unknown destination. She did not feel alarmed about its present safety. Something seemed to assure her that Mr. Aaron Morley had not discovered the spring, or the secret drawer to which it admitted.

She found the knob and pressed it firmly. The lid which concealed the aperture dropped with a sharp click. Jane stood motionless again, and was watchful. Once again she fancied there was a sound, she could not tell if it were a rustling movement, or a soft breath near her. She examined the room as thoroughly as the dim light would allow. There was certainly a vibration of the skeleton. Did a ghost animate the rattling bones at such an uncanny hour? Jane West was a steady, healthy young woman; a whole array of ghosts would not have frightened away her courage. She had a quick suspicion of a far more dangerous visitor, and plunged her hands hastily into the secret drawer. It was nearly full, and the darkness confused her; there seemed to be two boxes, and how was she to know which was the right one? Under the consciousness of a spy at hand, she dared not use her taper. She did what seemed the only thing possible under the circumstances, she gathered all the contents of the drawer at one swoop, thrust them into her pocket, and then she turned. One swift prayer for help and protection flashed instantaneously through her mind as she sped along, for she knew what was coming.

"Hold, Miss Jane West," shouted a scornful, triumphant voice, "not so fast, if you please, my dear."

There was the scratch of a match on the wall, and a flash of light which kindled into a broad glow, and the room was illumined.

There stood Mr. Aaron Morley, with a dressing-gown thrown hastily about him, with glittering eyes, and flushed face, glaring upon her in evil triumph, and there was Jane West, pale as a ghost, but steady and resolute in the attitude of an animal at bay. She did not pause for farther questioning, but bounded to the door, sped through, and clanged it after her. With an oath Aaron Morley was after her.

Jane ran along the corridor into the little entry, and seized upon the door, blessing the foresight which had unbolted and set it ajar.

Out in the cool night air she seemed to gain renewed strength. She ran along the deserted street like a young fawn, somehow fearless and exultant. She had it safe, the secret which Doctor Morley had left to her care; she had escaped from her odious gaoler. What need disturb her now?

Escaped?—Ah, there was the heavy plunging footstep behind, and when he finds that it is not swift enough to overtake her, he sets up a hoarse cry:

"Help! help! Stop thief! Ho, watchman, a thief! a thief!"

Jane West turned one moment, to look at the man, all the blood stinging and burning through her veins in utter scorn and contempt.

"He calls other help. He will not give me even a chance, I a woman and he a man. Shame upon the catiff!" muttered she through her shut teeth.

And then as she heard the hastening of the watchman before, and the plunging stride of the foe behind, she turned, bounded lightly over a garden wall, skimmed across a rear-yard, up and down steps, and was again in the street, and nearer the water. She had in her mind the sort of retreat needed, but was cut off from that quarter, and the pursuing force gained half-a-dozen recruits. She could hear them closing in upon her on three sides—they were pressing her nearer and nearer the water. Now indeed it was growing a desperate thing; poor Jenny wished indeed for a wren's wing to help her out of this sore distress. Not that, on her own account, she was afraid to face Aaron Morley and the whole force of the Sydney police. But to do that, would be to yield up to the greedy hands of his uncongenial brother, the treasured secret of Doctor Morley, and to betray the sacred trust he had left to her. If there were anything left in life precious to her, it was this conviction, that it was in her power still to serve Doctor Morley. She pushed on therefore, one hand clasping within her pocket the little package so boldly obtained, and in a moment more stood at the water's edge. How still and peaceful it was! The soft rippling of the wave was like a tender whisper. The stars shone down like dreamy, loving, motherly eyes. An infinite sweetness, even in the midst of her alarm and excitement, stole into Jane West's spirit. It was as if a cool hand had been laid upon her forehead in solemn benediction.

The hoarse shouts, the rude cry, the rushing steps, came on, but she looked up into the sky with a trustful, happy glance.

"I will do my best, Doctor Merley," murmured she.

And then she saw a boat rocking with the waves only a little beyond. It was but a moment's work to reach it, cast off, and push out from shore.

What strength there was in her arms, what brave courage and resolution in her heart! Farther and farther from the shore, and the shouting and bustle away from the pursuing foe.

Away out into the cove, clear against the sky, loomed up the graceful figure of a ship. It was Jane West's goal of desire. She said to herself she would reach it, shutting those even teeth of hers together savagely, even if she were obliged to leap into the water and swim to it.

But the pursuers were behind; they also had found a boat, and two pair of strong arms propelled the craft.

CHAPTER X

THE Sea Foam rather failed of her accustomed good fortune. She had head winds, and was twice becalmed. Captain Leyard mentally accused himself, of bringing a Jonas' conscience with him, and was gloomily prepared for anything disastrous. He was a thoroughly miserable man was Captain Leyard, so unlike his usual hearty, generous, cheery self, that it was no wonder the crew began to whisper from one to another that the skipper was bewitched. Singularly enough he found his chief consolation in the society of the chief object of his disquiet. Aside from a certain morbid compassion, Captain Leyard had learned to love the youthful passenger almost as well as if he had been that son whose sad dereliction had brought about the fatal temptation which had overmastered a sailor's rectitude.

Will Yarrel, indeed, had won all hearts on board the Sea Foam. And yet he was shy and retiring in his manners, and certainly made no effort to appeal to their compassion.

He would sit, an hour at a time, with his hands clasped listlessly, his sad brown eyes fixed afar upon the distant line where sea and sky mingled into one misty blue, but if anyone sought to probe the wound, which it was so plain to see rankled in the youthful breast, he drew back, singularly sensitive, and disturbed, and made no confident.

Captain Leyard was often vexed with the lad when, in the midst of some earnest, confidential talk, which seemed to call for some reference to personal matters, he would suddenly draw back, a sort of chilly veil dropping over the face, that had a moment before been sparkling with animation, and then the dreamy melancholy would return. But second reflection made the remorseful man thankful to the lad. He had affection and sympathy enough now for the lonely passenger. If there were any deeper grief behind, it was better he should know nothing about it.

They were approaching the dreaded island, slipping steadily southward, following the track to Brazil, until they should get out of the S.E. trade wind, be taken by the friendly South Atlantic current, and borne eastward around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean.

Captain Leyard pricked out his course on the chart, and looked shiveringly at the little black speck marked down at the left of Martin Vaz Rocks. They were bearing down upon it steadily. In two days more they would be sure to make the high gray line of coast. As if to tantalize him, the wind, which had been light and fitful, freshened up, and they dashed away gallantly. Captain Leyard paced the deck the night previous to the discovery of the expected land, and when, at daybreak, the man from the masthead shouted out the animated cry, "Land-ho!" he turned deadly pale, and rushed down into the cabin.

Will Yarrel sat there reading, and lifted his sorrowful brown eyes inquiringly at the master's precipitate appearance.

"We've sighted Trinidad," stammered Captain Leyard.

"Trinidad—you don't mean,—of course you can't mean one of the Antilles. We are nowhere in that track," said the youth, with a show of interest.

"No, not that Trinidad, would to heaven it were!" ejaculated Captain Leyard, going to his locker and pouring out a glass of wine. "This is a miserable little barren island, all alone by itself here. The government once upon a time tried a penal settlement upon it, but it didn't answer. Yet they say it is a romantic-looking place. I have never been upon it myself, but ships frequently stop for water. It would be handy for us to fill up those empty barrels, there."

Captain Leyard looked around nervously, as he said this, the cold sweat beading his forehead.

Will Yarrel was turning over a leaf in his book, and did not answer.

"I say, Will, lad, I'll go ashore and fill up the casks, if you would like the idea. We are really short, owing to the bursting of those hoops on the hoghead forward."

"I should like to see such an island certainly. I don't think I ever expected to set foot on an uninhabited island. I must go on deck and have a look at it."

"Pooh, there's nothing to be seen yet. We are ten leagues away. Wait till this time to-morrow. I really think I will make a call, and see what the place is like."

He went back to the deck, and began to talk about filling the water-casks.

The mate looked rather surprised, but answered carelessly:

"I have been ashore at Trinidad. It is rather difficult making a landing, except the water is very smooth. We can get some glorious turtle, and wild hogs are in the underbrush of the wooded parts. If you did not care for the delay, we might make an addition to the larder."

The captain saw that he was rather astonished nevertheless.

"The voyage is spoilt now," he said, testily. "We shan't make our time, and it is as well to be hung for a good deal as a little."

And so the order was given to bear down to the island. As they neared its shores Captain Leyard's secret shame and discomfiture before his subordinates was suddenly dispersed. They saw a great smoke rising from the highest cliff, and their own flag reversed fluttering from a tree, called for a countryman's help.

As soon as this discovery was made, there was great excitement on the Sea Foam's deck, and the shore was closely scrutinized by the aid of their most powerful glass.

"There is a group of men watching us," cried out the mate. "Some ship has been wrecked, and a boatful of them have reached the island."

Captain Leyard brightened up.

"Give them a signal, to show that we understand. Now of course we must stop at the island."

They lay off the island that afternoon before night-fall, but did not deem it prudent to attempt to make a landing until morning.

A boatload of the steadiest hands were ready the moment the sun illumined the scene, and the shipwrecked mariners hurried down to meet them with loud hurrahs.

"Aho! there! who are you, and how came you here?" demanded Captain Leyard, standing up in the boat, and making a speaking trumpet of his hands.

"Survivors of the Lively Jane; six nights out in an open boat; ask your help to a better berth than this old rock."

"The Lively Jane! That's likely!" ejaculated Captain Leyard. "Why we left her in the London Docks."

He repeated the observation when the boat plunged ashore with the breaker, and he leaped out, half-drenched with spray, into the midst of the rather sorry-looking group.

"Perhaps, Captain Leyard, the poor old craft lies at the bottom now. We sailed ten days after you, and had just the right winds, but we came into that terrible storm and were struck twice by lightning. The first bolt did us damage enough, but the last one set her on fire. Poor old thing! She's sailed her last trip, and she did it handsomely too."

The skipper of the lost vessel drew his hand hastily across his eyes.

"Why, Jack Holt, it is really you, isn't it?" exclaimed Captain Leyard, seizing the other by the hand. "And the Lively Jane has out-sailed us in this shape?"

"But gone to the bottom in doing it, man. And there let her rest. We put off in great haste when the lightning set her on fire, the mate in the other boat with half the crew. Heaven only knows what has become of them! We lost sight of them at sunset one night, and in the morning nothing was to be seen. I gave them full instructions to fall into this track, telling them of the island and the likelihood of Indian and South American ships picking us up. But there's not a sign of them, though it is possible some craft bound to Brazil has picked them up. Well, sir, we're glad enough to see the Sea Foam. Will you take us along to the Cape and put us ashore?"

"Are we heathens?" returned Captain Leyard, indignantly. "But you may be famished beside?"

"No; we found turtle enough, and managed to kill some birds. We could subsist here well enough, I suppose, in a savage fashion, but who could dwell in such a horrible solitude?"

Captain Leyard sighed, and looked around, to see what had become of Will Yarrel, who had come in his boat to the island. He had evidently wandered

away to make his own explorations, for he was not among the sailors grouped about the shipwrecked comrades of the Lively Jane.

"We will take you on board, as soon as you like," he said, somehow so dearly that his companion started, and looked inquiringly into his face. But Captain Leyard was not inclined to be communicative.

"I don't know but you will feel as if you were taking a Jonah on board the Sea Foam," said the latter, doubtfully. "and, faith, I've had some such thought myself. Curse that passenger! To think all those poor fellows and the mate, as good a seaman as ever trod a deck, may be gone to Davy's locker, and he is safe, sticking still in our way. I was a fool to let any money induce me to take him."

"A passenger?" said Captain Leyard, inquiringly.

"Yes, and a queer kind of one, too. If you'll believe it, we knew nothing about it until the night before we sailed, and then a boat came alongside and a queer fellow, muffled up to the eyes, came aboard and offered me double pay to take a passenger out to Rio, and he was only to come at the last minute. I may as well make a clean breast of it. I knew very well it looked like suspicious work, but I let the money blind my eyes, and I've got my pay."

Captain Leyard seized his hand, and shook it vigorously, although his friend was hardly able to account for his sudden warmth of sympathy, crying out:

"You did, you did—there's plenty more would have done the same, Holt, plenty more."

"I don't know. There's one man never will be caught again by the same trick. He's a queer old fellow; the sailors say he is in league with the powers of darkness, and they wanted to pitch him out of the boat that first night. Do you know he was brought aboard dead drunk, or else drugged, and swears he never intended making such a voyage? I can't make out whether he's been tricked by someone, or is playing me false. But he's not a fair and open man, that's plain enough, and there's not one of us but will be thankful to see the last of him."

"What have you got to do with him, Holt?" inquired Captain Leyard, in a low, husky voice.

"Do? Why, I was to drop him at Rio. Now you may do as you please; leave him on the island if you like. The thing is taken out of my hands."

"It is very strange," repeated Captain Leyard.

"Decidedly strange, Leyard. Why, he's an old man, over seventy. You'd have thought the night out in that open boat would have killed him, instead of which he is livelier and better than ever. You should see him rolling his eyes, and muttering. He'd make a capital Lear, only he's too savage. If that cool fellow who came and engaged his passage has really injured him, I don't envy him when this old chap gets at him, as he swears he will. He has made me describe his looks a dozen times, but I tell him the cloak and cap are all I can swear to."

"A blue cloth cloak, and cap of the same material," muttered Captain Leyard, mechanically, "long, grisly beard."

"Exactly! Why, man, have you seen him?"

Poor Captain Leyard groaned in spirit, but not outwardly.

"Such a man came to me the night before I left London."

"And you refused, and I was dolt enough to meddle with business you disdained to touch. I tell you this is a lesson, Leyard, to last me a lifetime. Confound the man in the blue cloak! Confound his eyes!"

"Blue eyes—what an odd pale colour they were," interposed Captain Leyard, ingenuously; "and so large!"

"Blue? Oh, no, Captain Leyard, they were gray and small."

"You were dazzled by the gold he brought, Holt; they were certainly blue, and no one could call them small."

"Well, well, with the rest of the mischief we won't let him make us quarrel; but they were small and gray, nevertheless. Come and see the old fellow; but if you don't want to be bored to death, you must not let him know you've seen the man in the blue cloak, let his eyes be what they will."

Captain Leyard looked over to the figure indicated by his companion's pointing finger.

He saw a man tall, and not much bent, but thin and spare, the skin dry and wrinkled, and as swarthy as an Indian's. He looked up just then, either because he had some clairvoyant knowledge of the scrutiny, or that he had been watching the pair, and Captain Leyard met an eye small and brilliant, which held somehow a singular glare like the fatal dazzle of a serpent.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Captain Leyard, startled in spite of his absent-mindedness. "I don't wonder your sailors were shy of him. Those are strange eyes to accompany that white hair."

I can't say I am particularly anxious to give him a passage."

"Leave him then," said the other, "it's none of my business."

"Leave him on the island," said the captain of the *Sea Foam*, slowly and thoughtfully, "don't you think it would be murder to leave a feeble person here?"

Captain Holt laughed lightly.

"Not at all. I think a woman would manage to subsist here, much more a man of his long experience, and ships are so often calling beside. It is a picturesque place for a Robinson Crusoe. Have you been to look at the cascades pouring like melted silver over the rocks?"

"I shall fill up the casks, now I have made a landing, and the boys must turn over a few turtles, and if we could shoot a wild hog it would help out the provisions amazingly. I must go and see about it."

Accordingly Captain Leyard went out to the group of sailors, who were watching the consultation of their superiors with close attention. He gave the mate a few directions, and then sauntered away, to look for his youthful passenger.

He called for him twice, before there was any response, and then the branching foliage of a thicket near at hand was parted cautiously, and a pale, frightened face looked out.

"Oh, Captain Leyard, I am a poor persecuted creature! Dangers lurk for me, even on this far-off, deserted island," he said, with quivering lips.

"He has found it out," thought Captain Leyard, his heart dropping like a lump of lead, and he hung his own head down, and was silent.

"Oh, sir, for the love of heaven help me, be my friend."

"My poor lad! Would to heaven I might! Curse the day when—" he paused, shame-stricken. Did Will Yarrel know the whole? how Captain Leyard had sold his honourable character for a bag of gold? If not, his own tongue should not be blistered by the confession of the humiliating truth.

But Will Yarrel by this time had partly overcome his agitation.

"Sir," said he, "I have one enemy worse than all the rest of my troubles, and they are not few. I do not know whether it was friend or foe who gave me into your charge, but I have blessed one result of his deed, that I was escaping from this cruel and inexorable enemy. I do not know what it means. He was certainly in London the day I was brought to you, but behold! almost the first face I saw when I stepped from the boat was his. Captain Leyard, can you save me, can you hide me from the old man with the white hair and those piercing eyes? Must you take him on board your ship? I suppose it is wicked in me to say it, but, oh, I wish he could be left behind."

Captain Leyard looked at him with less troubled eyes.

"You are afraid of that old man, Will?"

The boy shuddered.

"Yes, sir, terribly, mortally afraid of him. Can you hide me anywhere in the ship so that he cannot see me? He will know me. Those eyes of his pierce through everything. Oh, sir, I would rather the ocean swallowed me up. I would rather remain on this dreary, deserted island than go on board the ship with him!"

A quick flash of relief went over the captain's face. "I can have no possible excuse for leaving him. He is in company of all the others. How can I single him out, and say he must not go?" he said meditatively, "although he might be left here very comfortably, until another ship called at the island."

"Then leave me!" exclaimed Will Yarrel impetuously. "Oh, Captain Leyard, that man must not know, nor dream that I am here."

"Are you in earnest? Do you really desire to be left," asked the captain, scarcely able to credit his ears, and yet his heart leaping up jubilantly at this amicable settlement of his secret trouble.

"I do. You say there is no danger. I shall be here, secure and tranquil; what need I to fear? Oh, it is only of mankind that I need to stand in dread. Nature will whisper sweet and tender messages to me. Heaven is above me, and when the next ship touches at the island, it will take me away, and he need never know my fate. He will have lost the track. Let me stay, sir."

"It is a very singular request, but if it be your wish, I have nothing to say. I will send your trunk on shore, and an abundance of provisions. I will leave you signals, to call the attention of passing ships. I will leave you everything to make you comfortable."

Will Yarrel, after a hasty glance around, to be sure no one was in sight, seized his hand, and covered it with kisses, in the midst of which came a hot splash of tears.

"Oh, sir, the blessing of a poor persecuted creature shall follow you. Heaven reward you, and—"

"Hush," cried Captain Leyard, huskily, "or you will drive me mad. My conscience has already punished me enough. Do not thank me, but bless heaven, as I do, that it has turned what seemed a cruel imposition into a deed of mercy. Boy, boy, I was wicked enough to accept a bag of gold in payment for your passage, and for you to be left on this island!"

The agony of remorse on his face explained more lucidly than his words all Captain Leyard meant to confess.

For a moment the wide brown eyes stared at him, and then taking in all the revelation, they deepened and deepened to blackness. The two hands were flung in childish fashion over the agitated face.

"Oh, oh," cried Will Yarrel, "what have I done, what have I done, that everybody should be so willing to turn against me?"

That was the keenest thrust Captain Leyard had yet received. For a moment he staggered under it, and then in a grave, sorrowful voice he told the whole story.

"You are not to blame," exclaimed his listener. "I freely exonerate you from blame. Only help me in this matter, and I will not only forgive, but bless you."

"It shall be done," and I myself will see that you are rescued from the island. At the Cape of Good Hope I will find out the vessels bound to this track, and some of them shall call for you."

"I will hide in this thicket, then, until you get them all to the ship. Oh, be careful not to breathe a hint to that man. If this island were filled with wild beasts I would choose to remain, rather than venture upon the same ship with him."

He broke off suddenly, and crouched down behind the leafy screen. The mate and Captain Holt were coming around the rocks.

Captain Leyard hurried away to meet them, and with unusual alacrity proposed to get the Lively Jane's company at once on board the *Sea Foam*, which was presently accomplished. While they were being welcomed in the cabin and mess-room, a trunk and heavy box were lowered into the boat, and covered over with water-casks. Captain Leyard left the mate to look after affairs on board, much to his friend Holt's surprise, and went himself to oversee the filling of the water-casks.

He came back with a brighter face than his crew had seen on the voyage. The sails were set, and a gentle but steady breeze filled them out. The *Sea Foam* stood off from the bold shore, glided out like a fairy creature, lingering a long time, a white speck in the dazzling line of blending sea and sky, but finally dwindled and vanished.

Will Yarrel, on the lonely island shore, watched it disappear.

When it was fairly gone, the large, mournful, brown eyes were lifted upwards yearningly, the hands across the heaving breast clasped themselves prayerfully, and he murmured softly:

"At last! at last I am free from the persecution of men. I am alone with earth and heaven. Why should I tremble or be afraid? Nature is loving and beneficent. I can trust myself here, and fear no menacing mysteries."

(To be continued.)

HOW HARRY CAME HOME.

"Six years to-day! what a long, long time," sighed Maud Merlin, sinking into the low seat by the window, and pressing her sad, white face against the glass. "Ah, me! how happy I was; but it is all over, I shall never be happy again!"

Her dark eyes overflowed with tears, and her memory reverted to the old home of her childhood, the great, rambling country-house, with its spacious rooms, blazing fires, and large-hearted hospitality. She could see the old garden, with its winding borders, cool retreats, and catch the sweet odour of the pinks, and the drowsy murmur of the bees; and there was the woodbine-arbour, beneath which she and Harry had sat so often together. How well she remembered one evening above all others, an evening in June the air heavy with spicy odours, and a full moon pouring down its glorifying light upon the snowy billows of the orchard bloom, and the long hedges of roses, weighed down by their own intense perfume. On that evening she had listened to the story which has been so often repeated, but which never grows old. "Maud, my darling, I love you—will you be my wife?" She recalled the very words, she seemed to hear his dear voice, and see his tender eyes. The betrothal ring was still upon her finger, just as he had put it there on that night, and beside it another, even yet more sacred, her wedding-ring.

And this stormy, desolate night was the anniversary. Six years ago, and the old homestead had rung with music and revelry. Every window blazed with light, and every broad hearth-stone glowed with flaming logs. For on that night, robed in white, and adorned with blossoms as spotless and sweet as her own virgin heart, Maud, sole daughter of house and heart, and beauty and belle wherever she went, became a bride.

One year, one short, sweet, happy year, that passed by like some rare, rich melody, without a single note of discord to break its divine perfection, and then the trouble came. The bare remembrance of it blanched the wife's cheeks, and made her breath come in quick, painful gasps. At the close of that short, happy year of her wedded life, her husband received information concerning the illness of an only brother residing abroad. He was dying of a slow, but sure disease, and wished to see his brother's face once more. Harry Merlin did not hesitate an instant, the path of duty was plain—he must go. Maud entreated to be permitted to accompany him, but he was inexorable. The risks and hardships were too great.

Left alone, Maud was not the woman to give way to despondency; it was her nature always to be hopeful. She kept herself busy with the duties of her household, and at last the dreary days went by, and tidings from Harry came. He was safe at his journey's end, but his brother was dead, leaving Harry, however, the inheritor of a considerable fortune. As soon as his business matters could be arranged, Harry wrote he would start for home.

Maud counted the days with throbbing impatience, the parting had been so long; she so pined to see his dear face, and hear his voice once more. She worked from morn till night, filling the rooms with little ornaments, and getting up little surprises against his return. She cultivated the flowers he loved, and sang the ballads he admired; never did woman count the passing moments with such loving expectation. At last the day came. She had received no farther intelligence, but she felt sure that he would come. The evening was in spring, genial and balmy, their little home a wilderness of blossoms. She prepared his supper with her own hands; she adorned the rooms with the flowers he loved; and even laid out his dressing-gown and slippers, and drew his arm-chair beneath the window. Then she went to her chamber, and put on the dress he liked to see her wear—a mauve silk, with lace at the throat and wrists, and jet and gold ornaments; her glossy, brown hair held back by sprays of heliotrope and sweet verbena. Surveying herself in the mirror, she smiled and blushed, remembering his words when she had first worn the dress:

"Oh, Maud! you are so beautiful; always wear this dress, darling, when you wish to please me."

The May sun wheeled lower and lower, and at last went down, leaving the earth wrapt in the dim mists of twilight. Maud began to grow impatient. She lighted the lamps in the parlour, and then went out into the porch to wait. He surely would come, he would not disappoint her! The golden tints of day faded like the colours of a dream; the stars came out one by one in the hazy lustre of the sky; and then the moon arose, coming up grandly above the purple steeples. Still he had not come, and the poor wife's heart began to grow sick with hope deferred. Another hour, and then, above the murmuring music of the night, she heard a sharp stop upon the gravel; she started to her feet, flushed and breathless; but the next instant she fell back pale with disappointment, for the step was not his—she knew that long before the person came in sight.

"Mr. Rutherford, is it you? I am looking for my husband. What do you think can detain him?"

The man stood still, his face full of silent, unspeakable pity. Something in its expression caught her quick eyes, and she sprang forward and grasped his arm.

"Mr. Rutherford, you bring me tidings. Speak; don't keep me in suspense."

Still the man was silent.

"Oh, sir!" she entreated, "don't trifle with my feelings. Do you know anything concerning my husband? If you do, for mercy's sake, speak out!"

"Madam, I have heard—that is—is—there is bad news," he began, his voice husky and broken.

Her face grew as white as death; but her eyes were clear and calm, and her hand strong as she grasped his arm.

"Sir, if you pity me, tell me the worst at once, I can bear it."

"Well, madam, your husband and his party have been waylaid and murdered by the Indians."

"All? Did none escape?"

"Not one!"

She turned round quickly, leaving him without a word, and he saw her enter the house, close the door after her—and that was the end.

He would never come back any more, no matter how patiently he might wait and watch. He would never know that he had a son, never look upon the little chubby face, with its bold, blue eyes and sunny curls, so like his own. From henceforth her heart and home were desolate.

And this was the anniversary of her wedding-day. Six years ago, and she was a happy bride. Five years she had been a heart-broken widow. Her boy slept in his little bed, and she sat there, thinking and gazing out at the low, leaden sky, and the wind-tossed trees. The night was closing in rapidly—a night of storm and darkness. The rain came down in great, smoking sheets, and the wild, wailing winds rushed round the gables, and went shrieking over the hills like human souls in agony. Her heart ached with a desolation that seemed almost insupportable. Life was so hard, yet, for the boy's sake, she must endure and live on.

She looked down at her sable garments with hot, blinding tears. Six years ago, and she was robed in gems and blossoms. His face, his very voice, seemed to come back to her; and she fancied that his spirit must be near her. No matter how high above her, how happy, she knew that he loved her still, and his glorified spirit might have left its home of bliss to keep with her that sacred anniversary—the fancy consoled her beyond expression. She glanced over at the sleeping boy, with a dim hope that his father loved and watched over him. Then a sudden impulse shot across her mind; she would not keep the anniversary of her wedding-day in her garments of widowhood, she would put on the robe he loved.

Stealing up to her chamber, she took out the mauve silk, the dainty laces, growing yellow and time-worn, and the pretty jet and gold ornaments, and arrayed herself as in days gone by; and the old bloom came back to her cheeks, and the brightness to her eyes; and she seemed to lose her years and her widowhood, and to spring out afresh into the rare beauty of her early maidenhood. Thus arrayed, she went down softly and seated herself before the blazing fire, her face tearful and expectant.

The anniversary night wore on, wild and dark with storm, and still the poor wife, half dazed by her terrible sorrow, sat by her lonely hearth-stone, robed in her festive garments. At last there was a step without, a sharp, impatient step on the gravel, but she did not hear it. A weary, travel-worn man, bronzed by exposure, and pale with long-endured grief, came up to the front entrance, and paused beneath the low window. Through the parted curtains shone the ruddy firelight, revealing the warm, attractive room: the old, familiar one, with his hat upon the wall, and his books and meerschaum on the mantelpiece, unmoved as he had left them; the kitten purring on the rug, and the little curtained bed in the distance, and the dear, sweet face, wet with tears, and the dress he loved in happy days, that seemed too far back to the poor wanderer to be real. Was it all a dream? Was that the wife from whom he had so long been parted, whose face had been present with him through all his lonely hours of peril and imprisonment? Was she waiting and watching, and keeping his home bright for his return?

He left the window, stole softly to the porch, and approached the side-door. He raised the latch: it opened, and he stood upon the threshold.

Intent upon her own musings, her own sweet memories, and sad reflections, Maud heard no sound. Her heart was far away with the husband she had loved so well. The old dress had revived old associations, and his very presence seemed around and about her. She looked up with clasped hands and streaming eyes.

"Oh, Harry! oh, my husband!" she murmured, "if you know how I love you, how I mourn your loss, surely your soul might speak to mine, and tell me that you are near me."

"Maud, my wife, my darling!"

She started to her feet with a wondering, startled face. There he stood, worn and weary, changed indeed from the man he had been, but the wife recognized him in an instant. For a moment a solemn awe filled her eyes, and her love hesitated and trembled in the presence of a spirit from the other world; but the next instant she held him in her arms with a wild cry.

"Oh, Harry, my husband! you are not dead, you have come back to me!"

His passionate kisses on her face, his strong arms and throbbing heart, answered her as no words could have done. He had come back to her from imprisonment amid the wild western mountains, from perils and dangers, and death itself.

For a little while, after she had heard his story, and fully assured herself that he was really flesh and blood, and not a spirit, as she had first believed him, she lay quietly weeping on his bosom; then she arose, with a solemn tenderness in her eyes, and

leading him to the little couch, drew aside the curtains, revealing the little face, flushed and dimpled, in slumber, and the small, chubby fists clenched together.

Harry Merlin looked on without a word; then, bending down, he kissed the little sleeper with a joy and thankfulness in his soul too deep for utterance.

And on this stormy night, after weary years of imprisonment amid barbarous hordes, after having endured trials and hardships, and almost death itself, this was How Harry Came Home. E. G. J.

MICHEL-DEVER.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AGNES thought of the sad, young face that had bent over her couch two weeks before, and sighed; but she said nothing of the singular meeting Claire had sought, nor of the threats she had uttered. She considered her temporarily deranged, and gave little weight to them. In truth she was too wretched herself, to give much thought to the sufferings of another.

She sat silent so long that Colonel Thorne, who was very attentively regarding her face, at length asked:

"Do you require time to make up your mind to receive the repentant prodigal, my daughter? I will not doubt the result; for such love as you have felt for Walter is not easily cast aside; yours must brighten with life again, when he asks you to restore it to him, as the most precious boon that can be accorded him."

A faint tinge of colour came for the first time since her illness into her marble face, and with a sigh, she said:

"If I could only believe that, I—I might relent, for my own heart plays the traitor to me, and prompts me to the course you urge; though, alas! I feel the conviction, that happiness can never spring from the reunion of your son and myself."

"Let us at least make another trial, Agnes," said a voice, that thrilled through every pulse of her being. With a start, she raised her head, to find her husband standing beside her, with arms opened to enfold her in his embrace.

Acting on the impulse of the moment, Agnes sprang up, it seemed to her without any volition of her own, and fell, weak and trembling, upon his breast. While she wept convulsively, Thorne caressed her tenderly, and whispered:

"Forgive me, Agnes, and take me back to your heart. I will try to make you contented, at least. There is nothing left for either of us now, but to make the best of the fate we have embraced. Our lot may not be a cloudless one, but at least we can try to live together in unity and peace."

She raised her head, and said:

"After such a demonstration as this, I have no right to refuse. You may break my heart, as has been foretold, but it must cling to you, or perish."

Colonel Thorne softly left the room, and with a sense of triumph, Walter felt that this battle was won. Whether he would come off conqueror in those that still remained to be fought, the future alone could determine. He gazed over his abrupt departure, and prolonged silence, as well as was possible, and Agnes, willing to be deceived, listened to his excuses, and tried to believe them.

He did not tell her that her father almost forced him to join in the search for her; that motives of self-interest swayed him; for Colonel Thorne held the mortgage on Willow Glen, and upon it had been discovered a coal mine, that was found to be very valuable. Colonel Thorne had closed the mortgage, taken possession of the property, and offered it to his son as the price of a perfect reconciliation with his wife.

Agnes was strong enough to travel, and preparations for an immediate departure were made. Colonel Thorne and his son had their own carriage, and the pale invalid, well-wrapped up, was tenderly placed on the back seat, after taking a kind leave of Mrs. Jones, whose broad face beamed with satisfaction at the result of the interview between the estranged husband and wife.

She leaned into the carriage, and said:

"It's all for the best, ma'am. If a married woman can't find happiness with her good man, she ain't likely to find it anywhere else in this vale of tears."

"I believe you are right, Mrs. Jones, and therefore I return to my duty as a wife, and I shall never forget how good you were to me, and I hope you will remember me kindly."

"No fear about that, ma'am. I shall not forget how patient you've been, nor how liberal with your money. I've paid three times over for what I did for you. Keep a stout heart, and you and your hand-

some husband will get along as well as most married folks do."

They shook hands cordially, the gentlemen took their places on the front seat, and Walter took the reins.

It was a bright and balmy day, and Agnes felt new life and hope revive within her with every passing hour. On the following evening they arrived at Thornhill, over which she was installed as mistress, and for a few weeks all went on smoothly enough. Her father-in-law's stay with them was brief.

As long as Colonel Thorne remained, the conduct of Walter towards his wife was kind and considerate, but as soon as they were left alone he showed the utmost indifference to her, at times verging almost on contempt; for he could not deny himself the pleasure of proving to his wife that he had not forgotten her bitter words, and did not intend to forgive them.

He considered himself wronged of his freedom, and despised Agnes for the very love that brought her back to his arms. When a daughter was given to them, he showed no fondness for the child, and the link that should have bound them more closely together, became an additional cause of bitterness and discord.

Agnes, with all her natural pride and fire, resented not only the treatment she received at her husband's hands, but the utter indifference he manifested to her helpless little one, because it was her child.

She looked forward to a change in the unhappy life they led together, but fate denied her even that. A sudden and brief illness deprived her of the best friend she had, in the person of the ambitious Colonel Thorne, and Walter became the undisputed possessor of his father's wealth, and the ruthless master of her life.

Agnes would not leave him now, for she would never be separated from her child, and she knew that little as he cared for her darling May, he would never permit her to be removed from beneath his roof.

So the years passed on—she had her nursery—her husband, his studio, and they never sought each other in confidence, or affection.

When the tedium of his home became too oppressive, Walter Thorne left it for weeks, or months, as the whim seized him, and his wife soon learned to consider these seasons of absence the only quiet and peaceful ones she enjoyed. She had but one friend, Ada Digby pitied the terrible mistake both had made, but her sympathies were given to the woman whose fate had been wrecked, through her unappreciated affection for a hard and ungrateful man.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

On a warm evening in April, Mrs. Courtney was sitting in her own room, looking over some papers, and arranging them before going on the long journey that lay before her.

The preparations for embarking in the early part of May were nearly completed. Her son was at home, but he was restless and unhappy, and she feared the disappointment he had met with would exert an unfavourable effect upon his future life.

On Andrew's return to the Grange, his first inquiry was after Claire, and when told that she had not been heard from, he declared that he would go in pursuit of the man who had stolen her away, and if he had wronged her in any manner, he would exact a fearful expiation from him.

His mother used all her influence to detain him near her, and finally extorted from him a promise that he would wait, till within two weeks of the time appointed for their embarkation before seeking Claire. Then, if no news from her came, he might make inquiries in person, and satisfy himself as to her fate.

As the days and weeks passed on, bringing no letters from Claire, Mrs. Courtney also became very anxious to ascertain something of her godchild, and she felt as unwilling as Andrew to go so far away, without satisfying herself as to her actual condition.

The last evening of the stipulated time arrived. Her son had gone over to the post-office himself, and she was anxiously listening for his return, in the hope that he would bring a letter for her from the absent one.

At length she heard his step upon the terrace, and laying down the paper she had been looking over, she glanced eagerly towards the door. Andrew came in, frowning heavily, and throwing his riding-whip upon the floor, angrily said:

"It is the last day of grace, and there is nothing for you. Not a line—not a word to the friends who would have stood by her through everything. Claire is not ungrateful—I maintain that, though she did elope from your protection; and if she had anything good to tell, she would have written long ago. I

know that the wretch she trusted has blasted her life, or broken her heart. For either he shall dearly pay, I swear it. I will go in pursuit of him to-morrow. It is now more than six months since she left the Grange, and it is high time that somebody interested in her fate should be looking after her. I can act the part of her brother, though a nearer and dearer relationship was denied me."

His mother reluctantly replied:

"I suppose that no other course is now left. I am very anxious about the poor girl myself; but, Andrew, I am afraid that sending such a firebrand as you in pursuit of her, is not the wisest plan I could adopt. I think it will be best for us to travel together, and if Claire has been badly treated, I can be her friend better than you. We can go on from here to London in time to embark on the India. She sails on the eleventh of May, and we have ample time to discover what has become of my poor child."

"Suppose he has murdered her," said Andrew, with dilating eyes. "I have read of such things, and her incomprehensible silence gives us licence to think the worst. Such an unmitigated scoundrel as I believe this Thorne to be, would be capable of anything."

"Yes—anything short of murder," said a voice that startled both mother and son. Andrew started from the seat on which he had thrown himself, and rushed towards the open door.

There, standing in the shadow, was the worn and weary phantom of the bright sylph who had fled from the shelter of that roof a few brief months before. The light of childhood had faded from her brow, its smiles from her lips, and she appeared ten years older than when they had last looked upon her.

Claire came forward with languid steps, knelt before Mrs. Courtney, and burying her face in her dress, in a voice sharpened by anguish, cried out:

"I have come back, desolate and broken-hearted, to the sole friend I can claim on earth, and if you refuse to receive me, there is nothing left for me but to die. Oh, mamma! I am the most wretched of women!"

Mrs. Courtney lifted her in her arms, caressed her tenderly, and wept some bitter tears over her. She softly said:

"You were right to come to me in your trouble, Claire, and the promise I made your father shall be sacredly fulfilled. But where is your husband? Why are you alone? and how is it that I have not been kept informed of what happened to you?"

"I had nothing good to tell you—nothing but humiliation and anguish worse than death. Look at my face, my hands, do they not show you that I have struggled with an illness that brought me almost to the verge of the grave? The man for whom I forsook you, cast me off; he broke the feeble link that bound him to me, and gave his hand to another girl to whom he had been betrothed before he came hither. His father, a hard, stern man, refused to acknowledge the penniless bride Walter had found for himself, and I was ignominiously turned from his house. Had my husband been true to me, he would have been disinherited. He weighed me in the balance against his father's gold, and that preponderated."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Andrew through his closed teeth. "How dared he wreck the life he had promised to cherish and make happy? Claire, you shall be avenged. The coward thought you had no friend to stand by you, but I, boy as I am, I will bring him to an account for his baseness!"

She turned towards him with an expression of dreary calmness, and said:

"No, Andrew, that must not be. I thank you for the interest you manifest in my fate, but it is settled now, and a duel with Mr. Thorne could not do me any good. The day will come, shall come, in which I will repay him with interest, for every pang he has made me suffer. I can live on till that time arrives, preparing myself for the part I shall have to play."

"I consent on one condition," replied Andrew, gloomily; "and that is, that I shall be permitted to aid you in bringing retribution to this man who has so irreparably injured you."

Claire paused a moment, and then said:

"Perhaps I may need you—if so, I will call upon you."

"Oh, my children, what compact is it that you are making?" cried Mrs. Courtney in alarm. "Forgive, as you hope to be forgiven, is the Christian law, and you both must learn to abide by it."

Claire turned from Andrew, and in tones of pathetic entreaty said:

"Oh, mamma, take me in your arms again; let me feel that I have a shelter on the tender heart that watched over my childhood, and softer feelings may come to me. I treated you very badly, but I have

been bitterly punished—how bitterly, heaven and my own heart alone know."

Mrs. Courtney again clasped her to her breast, and tenderly said:

"I forgive you, my child. I receive you back as a gift from heaven, for I have sadly missed you. We will go far from this country, into new scenes; you will forget this sad episode in your life, and yet be happy."

Claire shuddered, and mournfully replied:

"That is a word which henceforth has no meaning for me. But I can live on without it, cherishing the purpose that has given me courage to face the desolation of my lot. Oh, mamma, I am no longer the bright, pure spirit I once was. Fallen—fallen is my nature, and I can make no effort to exorcise the demon, which ever whispers that vengeance on that false man may yet be mine."

"Hush, hush, my dear Claire; this is madness. In time, your mind will regain its true tone, and with a return of tranquillity, the evil promptings will cease. No man, and still less woman, should arrogate the right of Deity to punish wrong. Quiet your agitation, and try and tell me all that has happened to you since we parted."

Claire sat down beside her friend, shook aside the short curls with which her head was covered, and after a pause to collect her thoughts, commenced from the night of the flight from the Grange, and told all she could remember of her painful experience. She ended by saying:

"I should have come back to you as soon as I was strong enough to travel, but the kind friend who received me, would not permit me to leave her house while the winter lasted. She wished me to remain with her altogether, but that was impossible. Only with the friend of my childhood, could I hope for peace. I left Miss Digby's house at last, without her knowledge, for she always had some excuse for detaining me, and I feared you would be gone, if I tarried longer with her. On the way hither, I stopped at a country tavern, because I was too weak to travel through the night. I there found my rival, deserted like myself, in the first weeks of her marriage. Walter Thorne obeyed his father's commands to the letter, but broke them in the spirit, for his last wife was travelling alone, when she fell ill on the way, and he was, heaven knows where, amusing himself. I saw her, spoke with her, and I pitied her, for she loves him, and he, in spite of his conduct to me, I know loves me."

"My dear Claire, rid yourself of that idea, for Mr. Thorne loves no one but himself. Without remorse, he has sacrificed both you and her, but you are more fortunate than she is, you are freed from him. Do not delude yourself with the belief that this man ever truly loved you."

Claire almost passionately cried:

"It is no delusion. He made one little month of my life a dream of heaven! He is hard, unprincipled, and, as you say, supremely selfish, but such heart as he has, is mine—all mine, and on that certainty I base my hopes of retribution. I will not give it up, for it is all I have to live for. Take that hope from me, and I shall perish."

Mrs. Courtney soothingly said:

"We will not speak any more of that at present. Finish your recital, my dear; who brought you hither to-night, and how came Andrew to miss you, for he has just returned from the post-office?"

"I came in the coach to — and walked on here; I saw Andrew as he passed through the woodland, but I concealed myself, as I wished to meet you before speaking with him."

"You came alone four miles through the forest, and at night too! You, who were once afraid to go through the house after dark."

"It is my lot to go alone now. I know that henceforth I must suffice to myself. I was not afraid in the woodland, for I felt that there, the great spirit of nature was around me as a protecting presence. Houses are sometimes haunted by evil spirits, but forests never that I have heard of. The only phantoms that crossed my path to-night, were the memories of that fatal one when I left the safe shelter of this roof, and went forth with one unworthy of belief, or trust. Oh, mamma! you are very good to take me back again, but I hope that I shall not long be a burden to you."

Mrs. Courtney regarded her with surprise.

"What can you mean, Claire? I hope you are not already maturing another plan to desert me."

"If I am, it is not to return to my recreant husband, for he is my husband, in spite of the decree that annulled our union. I am Walter's lawful wife, though that other poor victim will bear all his harshness and indifference, in the belief that it is her duty to do so. Let me tell you my plans, mamma, and I am sure that you will sanction them. You are aware that my father left a son in France, who is a middle-aged man now. He is rich, though he left us to live

in poverty, but I do not think that was altogether Armand's fault. I shall appeal to him to do a brother's part by me; take me to France with you, where I shall probably find one both able and willing to provide for me."

Mrs. Courtney was silent for a few moments; she then said, with a glance towards her son, who had been an eager listener to this conversation:

"I know something of your brother, and we will settle about this at some future day. But, is it possible, that Mr. Thorne has been base enough to cast you off, without affording the means of living independently of others, to one he has so irreparably injured?"

Claire drew her slight form up with a movement of superb disdain.

"Compensation in money was offered by his father, for Walter has nothing of his own; but I refused it. I would sooner toil for my daily bread, than be indebted for it to the man who so cruelly insulted me; who sent me from his house as if I had been a leper, whose presence infected its atmosphere."

"You were right, Claire, to refuse his money. Like fairy gold, it would have brought a curse with it. But do not speak, or think of ever going back to the house from which you were spurned. You have a better one always open to you, with true hearts in it, who will do their best to render you at least contented. Only let me do something for you. Let me prove by my actions how ready I am to do battle in your cause. I will find this man, and make him answer for his baseness."

Claire turned towards him, and grasped his hand.

"Dear Andrew, you are a true cavalier, and I thank, and honour you. But for me, no risk must be run; no blood shall be shed on my account, and if you were to seek Walter Thorne, that would surely follow your meeting. Leave me to work out my own plans; the blood I refuse to allow to flow in expiation of my wrongs, shall yet be wrung from his heart in drops of bitterness. My hand alone must strike the blow that shall reach him; you are but a boy, and I will never consent to embroil you with the wretch who has destroyed my youth, and made my life desolate."

While she thus spoke, Claire looked so wild and fierce, that Mrs. Courtney was firmly impressed with the belief, that her mind had not entirely recovered from the shock of her desertion.

She gently said:

"You need repose, Claire. Come with me to your old room; no one has occupied it since you went away. I will order some refreshment to be sent up to you, before you retire."

"Yes—I am very weary, but I do not need food, and by this time, it is known through the village that I have returned alone. It is well that we are going away, for I could not live here in the future. Good night, Andrew; I shall not forget that you would have avenged my broken life, but that species of retribution would not suit my purpose."

The ardent youth took the hand she held out to him, and pressed it so fervently to his lips, that she suddenly withdrew it, and proudly said:

"Do not be too demonstrative to a wedded wife, Andrew. Remember that, in my own eyes, I am that, though I have permitted my husband to put another in my place. I am helpless now to right myself, but it will not always be so. Good night."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CLAIRE left the room with her friend, and, half an hour later, Mrs. Courtney returned, to find her son pacing the room like a madman. He turned fiercely upon her, and rapidly said:

"Claire cannot mean it; she will never be so silly as to cling to the absurd idea of bringing retribution to a man who is unworthy of a single thought! Oh, mother! to have her back with us, on any terms, is happiness to me. We must win her to forget him, and be to us what she formerly was."

"If you ask for nothing more than that, my son, I think we may succeed," replied his mother. "The poor child has endured more than the bitterness of death; and, knowing how deeply she has suffered, I forgive her for her treatment to myself. I will do all that is possible to restore her to her former brightness of heart; but to you she can never be more than a sister."

"Why not? If I can make her love me, I will marry her, in spite of every argument against it. I am my own master—or, at least, I shall be when I am twenty-one—and I can then use my freedom as I choose."

"My dear Andrew, you are cheating yourself with a fatal delusion. Claire will never give up the wild hope of yet compelling Walter Thorne to acknowledge her before the world as his wife. I fully understand that from her strange words. I fear that her mind is warped; but she has always shown

singular tenacity of purpose, and you, nor any other man, will ever be able to induce her to abjure the phantom she is bent on pursuing, and accept in its place the love of an honest heart."

"We shall see," he moodily replied. "If I thought this Thorne would be always in my path, I would seek him out at once, and slay him with my own hand. He merits such a fate, if man ever did."

"That course would scarcely serve your cause with Claire," said Mrs. Courtney, coldly. "You seem very ready to fasten on yourself a life-long remorse, and speak of taking a human life as calmly as if the law of heaven does not forbid it. I regret to see that all my teachings have produced so little fruit."

"But this man is unworthy to live! It would be doing good service to mankind, to blot out from among them such an ingrate as he has proved himself to be," cried Andrew, impetuously.

"That may be, but it is not you who have the right to sit in judgment upon him, and then proceed to execute the sentence you have yourself pronounced against him. Besides, Claire would never forgive you, if you undertook to redress her wrongs in that way."

Andrew angrily exclaimed:

"Then she cares for him still! If she hates him, as her words implied, she would thank and reward the man who took up her cause and avenged it."

His mother gently replied:

"The human heart is difficult of comprehension; but, if I read Claire's aright, there is beneath all its bitterness a delusive hope, that a day of reunion will come between herself and Walter Thorne. That is the only consolation she has now; judge then how little she would thank you for interfering between them in any way."

"But she must put aside so wild a notion, she must forget him, or think of him only with contempt and aversion. How can she cling to a man who has so ruthlessly crushed her? Mother, Claire shall yet turn from him to me; I swear it, and I will not be baffled."

"Andrew, you make the path before me a very difficult one. You will force me to regret having again received Claire under my protection. If you were not going to Heidelberg to remain two years, I would not take her to Europe with me at all. As it is, when I get to Paris, I shall either surrender her at once to the care of her brother, or place her in a school to complete her imperfect education."

"You will do the last, mother, for Claire is your godchild, and you are responsible for her. You must never give her up to this brother of hers till you know something of his character. From his treatment of her father, I should say that he is unworthy to be trusted with his sister. Poor Claire seems to be doubly cursed, with a worthless husband and a heartless brother. Did M. Lapierre never explain to you how it was that he had a son in France, the possessor of wealth, while he drugged on here to the last, for the small sum you annually paid him?"

"He spoke of him to me a few days before his death, and I think it must have been some presentiment of his approaching fate that induced him to do so. He stated that M. Latour and himself had some business difficulties, which ended in an open rupture; for he had taken his son into partnership in the banking-house, of which he was the head."

"Why do you call him Latour? Was not his name the same as his father's?"

"His mother was noble, and he chose to assume her name when he took possession of the estate he inherited from her. Such things are of frequent occurrence."

"A precious specimen he must be! Yet you are thinking of making him the guardian of his disowned sister."

"M. Latour has not disowned Claire, for I scarcely think he is aware of her existence. His father held no communication with him for many years before his death; and I believe it even possible that the son was never informed of his second marriage. He told me that if anything happened to himself, he wished me to take Claire with me to France, find her brother, and with the assistance of papers he left behind him, establish her claim to the sum of forty thousand francs, with the interest that has accumulated on that sum, during the last eighteen years."

"And with that money due to him, M. Lapierre vegetated here, and never claimed it! What a strange man he must have been!"

"My son, do not speak so lightly of so noble and high-toned a man as your old tutor was. I do not understand the details of the case; I think M. Lapierre was a very resentful man, but he made it clear to me that Claire had a just claim upon her brother, which I shall certainly put forward."

"But he did not tell you to give his daughter up to the tender mercies of this affectionate and dutiful son?" asked Andrew, bitterly. "As to

myself, I would sooner see Claire thrown into the arena with wild beasts, than surrendered to such a man as this Latour must be. His own father abandoned his native land sooner than dwell on the same soil with him, and I am sure there must have existed a bitter and irreconcilable feud between them, nearly as they were related."

"I have no wish to part from Claire myself, but you may render it necessary for me to do so. If you dread the thought of placing her under the care of her natural protector, you must put a curb upon yourself, and give me no cause of uneasiness on your account. My first duty is to my own children; after performing that, I will do the best I can for the unfortunate girl who has again returned to me. If you are really her friend, you will bury this mad passion in oblivion, and learn to regard Claire only as a dear and cherished sister."

"As if that were possible, mother—I shall love Claire to the end, as I have loved her since I could remember anything. But I will try and do nothing to frighten you into throwing her into the power of her brother. I hope that you will not be able to find him, nor do I wish Claire to accept money from him. You are rich enough to give her as much as Latour owes her, and neither Julia nor I would object."

Mrs. Courtney smiled faintly.

"I dare say not, but I have a promise to fulfil which was made to the dead. M. Latour will not be difficult to find, for he still has business connexions in Paris. He is not an acting partner, but a large portion of his fortune is embarked in the banking-house of Latour & Co."

"Why, how did you find out all this, mother?"

"I wrote to a friend in Paris immediately after M. Lapierre's death, to ascertain what chance there was to obtain justice for Claire. The reply came two months ago, but as she was gone I said nothing about it."

"Is Latour married?"

"He has no wife, but when in Paris he keeps up an elegant establishment. He is supposed to be very rich, but he wastes money in various ways, and no one can tell how long his resources may last."

"Umph! a spendthrift—a defaulter—a bad son! A charming relative to claim, upon my word! I think it will be better for all concerned to let this man rest in the shade; no good can come to any of us, from allowing him to know in what relation he stands to Claire."

"It is too late for such a course as that. Claire understands her claim upon him, and from her words to-night I think she intends to enforce it, if necessary. I have no right to ask her to forego it; and, after all, M. Latour is her brother. We have no power to withhold her from him, if he asks her to go to him, and she consents."

"She will never do that, after all your kindness to her."

"She will certainly do it, if you attempt to breathe into her ears a hint of your insane passion for her. Claire is a willful and impulsive creature, and no one can tell what she may do in a moment of excitement. Heaven help you both! for you are alike in some respects, and most unfitted to bear the burden of life together, even if she would listen to your warning."

"She shall listen to it yet, and give back love for love," he muttered under his breath; but he added aloud: "Good-night, mother! I think I have listened to enough wisdom for one lesson. You mean kindly, I know; but I am afraid I am not as grateful as I should be. I will promise to be on my good behaviour on our voyage, and I have too much to occupy me before it begins, to waste much time in thinking of Claire."

He kissed her forehead lightly, took up his candle, and went to his own room.

Mrs. Courtney sat late over her accounts, but her thoughts were not with them. At length she put them away, and slowly moved towards her own apartment.

She could not refuse the deepest sympathy to the forlorn creature who had thrown herself on her compassion, but she had not quite forgotten or forgiven the wilful disobedience which had resulted so fatally to Claire herself. If she had not followed the bent of her own will, how different a fate might have been hers!

Under the fostering care of her maternal friend, she would have developed into sweet and gracious womanhood; in time, the fervent love of Andrew might have won its reward, and the course of her life have been comparatively smooth.

Andrew had his faults of temperament and character, but they were trifling in comparison with those of the man Claire had so implicitly trusted, only to have her heart broken and her pride trampled in the dust.

Mrs. Courtney shuddered as she thought of what results might follow this too early initiation into the

harshest realities of life for one so brilliantly endowed with beauty, intellect, and passion.

That Claire would not remain passive under the humiliation and suffering which brought to the surface all that was evil in her nature, she felt assured. Into what it might culminate, who could tell? And her son, the darling of her life, had set his heart upon this wayward, unattainable creature, this young leopardee, who only veiled her claws till the opportunity for a fatal spring upon her enemy should be possible.

Mrs. Courtney might be pardoned if in her heart arose the wish that it might be possible to remove the responsibility of such a fire-spirit upon the brother on whom she possessed the strongest claim.

It was late before she slept, but she was aroused at an early hour by the rapturous exclamations of her little girl over the return of her dearest Claire. Julia rushed into her mother's chamber, crying:

"Oh, mamma—mamma, Claire has come back; but something is the matter with her! She don't laugh and frolic with me as she used to do. She took me in her arms and cried over me, but I was glad to see her back for all that. Betty is here, and I thought she would have gone crazy with joy when she saw Claire again. But where has she been all this time, and where is Mr. Thorne? I thought he was coming back with her."

Mrs. Courtney looked down on the eager face of the child. She sadly replied:

"You must not speak of him, Julia—he is dead to Claire now."

"Dead, mamma!—then no wonder she cried. Oh, I am so sorry for her—shan't I tell her how sorry I am?"

"No, my love; that would only distress her more. You must never mention Mr. Thorne's name to her."

"But, mamma, you talk of my papa—and even like to do it—and he is dead, too."

"But, my dear, Claire and I are not alike. I have been alone many years; but with her it is a new and very bitter grief. Don't ask her any questions, Julia. I am sure you will not, when I tell you that it will be unkind to do so."

"Well, I'll be good then, and not tease her—only I hope she won't cry over me much. I had much rather she would romp and play with me as she used to do before Mr. Thorne came."

Suddenly the voice of Claire spoke through the half-open door:

"Come with me, Julia, and give mamma time to dress. Let us visit poor old Carlo's grave—you promised to show it to me."

The child sprang away, and her mother heard her talking busily as the two crossed the hall and went forth into the yard.

The faithful old dog had been buried near a slump of shrubbery that stood on a little knoll in the rear of the house, and Julia had induced her brother to carve out a wooden board, and place it at the head of his small grave. Andrew had cut the name of "Carlo" in large letters; and beneath it in tiny characters, were the words:

"A faithful friend—slain by the treacherous hand of one we trusted."

As Claire stooped over to read the inscription, Andrew joined them. Before he could utter the salutations of the morning, she raised her head, and with flashing eyes pointed to his work, as she haughtily asked:

"Does that refer to me? You carved those words, and you knew nothing of him. How dared you suppose me capable of hurting poor Carlo?"

With fire equal to her own, he replied:

"The dog was in your way, and he was poisoned. Was not the inference a just one, that you had, at least, been privy to his destruction?"

"Oh, brother, don't say that," cried Julia, "for you know that Claire would never have hurt even a hair on poor old Carlo."

Andrew's ungovernable temper was aroused by the angry glare in Claire's eyes, as she fixed them upon him, and he defiantly replied:

"I don't know that at all. She wounded my mother to the heart by eloping with a man she knew little enough about, and she struck a mortal blow at mine by giving herself to him. Yes, you know what you were to me," he passionately went on,—"You have always known it, yet you forsook those that loved and cared for you, to go off with a man who has rewarded you with a worse fate than was given to the poor old dog."

Claire covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears. Julia caught her brother's hand, and whispered:

"Oh, brother, how could you talk to her of Mr. Thorne. He is dead, you know, and Rosebud is sorry about him."

"I would to heaven he were dead," muttered An-



[CARLO'S GRAVE.]

drew, as he approached nearer to Claire, and tried to speak in a gentler tone.

"Don't mind me, Claire; you know my temper always gets the better of me. I don't believe that you put Carlo out of the way, or that you even knew anything about it. The same ruthless hand that has crushed you, gave him the deadly drug that killed him. There—forgive me—let us be friends again."

She raised her face, pale with the conflict of passions that rent her heart, and said:

"On two conditions I will forgive you. They are, that you never again refer to my wretched past; that you respect my position sufficiently, to refrain from any allusion to the affection you profess for me. In the church yonder, I plighted the vows that shall be binding on me, though they have been broken by him who pledged his in return. I am a forsaken wife, but still a wife; remember that, through all our future intercourse with each other, or we shall cease to be friends."

She walked away with the proud bearing of an insulted queen, and Andrew stood looking sternly after her, internally raging at the words she had just uttered. He clenched his hands, and muttered:

"We shall see. Haughty as you are, you shall bend to me yet, and accept the love I will make necessary to you. I will win you in spite of yourself."

With terrified eyes, Julia looked up into his excited face, and then slowly asked:

"Why do you look so angry, brother? and what did Claire mean? I don't know why you should quarrel with each other, and she just come back, too. I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself, to make her cry as she did."

"Babies like you have no right to think about anything," he roughly answered. "You can't understand affairs; but you are not to tell my mother of what has happened here. Do you hear that, Julia?"

"Oh, yes, I hear plainly enough," replied the little lady, offended in her turn, and she was moving away, when Andrew caught her by the arm, and bending over her, significantly said:

"You had better heed my words, too, Julia. I am not trying to threaten you, child, but my mother would only be annoyed to know that Claire and I have had a quarrel, and it will be best not to tell her of it."

"Then I won't tell, for I don't want to trouble her. Let my arm go. I must go to Claire, and try to make up for your crossness."

Andrew permitted her to leave him, and half an hour later, the four met at the breakfast table.

Claire, whose vivacity and grace had once been

its ornament, sat like a sorrowful phantom beside it. She made an effort to talk, but soon relapsed into vague silence, and the delicate viands placed before her seemed to offer no temptation to her appetite.

Andrew lowered like a thunder-cloud ready to break into electric flashes, and but for Mrs. Courtney's deep compassion for the unhappy girl, she would have bitterly regretted the necessity that brought Claire again beneath her roof, and throw her in daily contact with her son. She felt her inability to curb Andrew in any way, for his fiery will and headlong temper had, even in childhood, been beyond her control; now, it was hopeless to do more than influence him when he was in a tractable mood.

When the meal was over, he followed his mother to her morning room, and curtly said:

"I am going away to-day, and I shall be glad if you will have my things packed. I am not willing to stay any longer in so gloomy a dungeon as this house is, since all the joy and life went out of it with Claire's brightness. I would as soon eat funeral baked meats 'as sit at the table with her again, till she becomes more like her old self."

Mrs. Courtney was glad of any respite from his moodiness, and she quickly replied:

"It is the best thing you can do, my son. You can make a parting visit to your cousins, and return here in time to escort us to London. With the assistance of my lawyer everything can be settled to my satisfaction, without troubling you at all."

"So much the better, for I am weary of the monotony of this place, and I need a change. I have but one charge to give you, mother, and that is, to impress on Claire that you are the one to protect her, and not this unknown brother of hers."

"Let the future take care of itself, Andrew," said his mother, impressively. "I shall do the best by Claire that is consistent with the higher duty I owe to you."

"I am going away to try and forget all about her. I'll see if my cousin Emma has grown into as pretty a girl as she promised to become, and maybe, I shall console myself with her."

"I only hope that you are in earnest, Andrew, for Emma possesses the qualities you will need in a wife, when you are old enough to take one. She is gentle and yielding, and she would be to you what I was to the father you so strikingly resemble—a spirit of peace."

Andrew regarded her for a moment in silence, and then more gently, said:

"It is hard upon you, mother, to have a second edi-

tion of so passionate a man as my father was to deal with. I remember his fiery and impulsive temper very well, but you bore it all like an angel, and made him happy in spite of his own shortcomings. I will make an effort to do what will please you, but I have many doubts as to my success."

"Only try in good faith, Andrew, and the result will be all that I could wish," replied Mrs. Courtney, with a sigh. "If I possessed with you the same influence I once wielded over your father, all would be well. But I fear you think it manly to rebel against your mother's authority, and set her wishes at defiance."

He blushed scarlet, and frankly said:

"Perhaps there is some such silly feeling in my heart, but, indeed, mother, I have the highest respect for you, and I earnestly wish to remove from you your present cause of uneasiness—therefore I am going away."

"Thank you for that concession, my son," and she kissed him tenderly. "Put from yourself all thoughts of Claire—regard her as utterly beyond your reach, and you will soon gain a victory over your passion for her."

"Perhaps so," was the vague response; "I can but try at all events. I am going now to order my horse, and I shall take my servant with me to bring him back. I shall be sure to return in time to accompany you to London."

Thus it was settled, and Andrew set out on his journey. After he was gone, Mrs. Courtney pursued her preparations for departure with a lightened heart; Claire endeavoured to render herself useful to her, and in the active occupation of the following days, she grew to be something like her old self.

Her health became stronger, and her spirits began to revive, though at times she was plunged into the deepest gloom, from which nothing could arouse her. At such seasons she roamed alone about the place, occasionally extending her rambles as far as the old ruins, in which she and her father had lived together. But these visits made her more gloomy than before, so she gradually confined her walks to the domain around the Grange.

Yet, every spot about the grounds was filled with memories of Thorne, and if she had wished it, she could not have escaped from that enthralling past. But she did not wish it; to him all her thoughts turned;—to find the means of reaching him, and repaying him for the ruin of her young life, was her one absorbing dream, and soon it became the master passion of her undisciplined soul.

(To be continued.)



[SHERLOCK AND THE WOMAN IN BLACK.]

COPPER AND GOLD.

CHAPTER VII.

FREELAND was a man of unquestionable nerve and action. He was prominent in his class as one with whom it was dangerous to take liberties, notwithstanding his freedom of speech and manner. He was irritable to a fault, or rather to a serious defect, in his general good character. No doubt the blight upon his reputation, so jealously guarded by him from the knowledge of the world—a blight known not even to Rouletta, to whom he confided every care and vexation, caused this unpleasant trait in a temperament naturally open, frank, and forbearing.

But there was an indefinable something radiating from the countenance of the Arabian, which subdued his irritability. No other man could have taken the personal liberties with Harry Freeland that had been taken by this stranger, not even his most intimate friend, without receiving a buffet in the face, though he died for it.

Perhaps, had he known that this bold stranger was an aristocrat by a lineage of centuries—a prince by a descent of more than a thousand years—the blacksmith might have been spurred to instant resentment, for he hated, with a bitter democratic hate, all artificial lines of society.

He knew nothing of the stranger, farther than that he was infinitely his superior in physical prowess. He felt, it is true, an overwhelming sense of his own inferiority to the stranger, in something besides mere bodily strength; but, as he believed him to be far below himself in the scale of rank—a mere follower of an art which he despised as being simply useless, except as an ornament, he attributed this superiority of presence to the devil, to magic, to anything but the true cause—superiority of education and intellect.

He did not, therefore, resent the indignity he had suffered, in having his wrist violently wrenched by a stranger in his own house, but remained motionless and speechless as the Arabian slowly smoothed the crumpled note upon the table, and deliberately perused it.

He watched to guess at the contents, but the calm repose of the dark features evinced nothing which might aid him.

Rouletta, too, seemed quelled by a species of awe beyond her understanding; and, as the Arabian folded up the note, and secured it in a secret pocket of his vest, she had no power to demand it from him.

"Who is he? What is he?" thought she, as her

eyes sank beneath his steady regard. "Why did he wish to read the note? How came he to know that the handkerchief concealed it? What is it to him? Why does he keep it?"

Her eyes expressed this as she forced them to meet those of the Arabian, and he understood her as well as if she had spoken them with her lips.

It was then that the prince produced and wrote upon his ivory tablet the same word which he had written beneath the picture of the handsome Frenchman:

"Maranatha!"

Rouletta read the word and trembled. She was learned far above her station, and she instantly recognized its dread meaning. It was an anathema, a curse, a bitter, scathing malediction. The great apostle Paul had used it against great crimes, and she imagined this mysterious stranger meant thus:

"Your lover is a villain, and if you go with him, may the Lord come speedily to punish you for a folly which is a crime!"

She placed the tablet upon the table, and said not a word. She was appalled. The word was traced in Arabic characters. How had this man learned that she understood Arabic?

Freeland snatched up the tablet, and stared at it, exclaiming:

"Maranatha! The same word that was traced upon the wall under the portrait of the Frenchman!"

"Ah!" thought the prince, as his dark eyes rested sharply upon the face of the smith, "this man, also, understands Arabic! Now, where did he learn it? He is deeper than I thought, for even in the brief moment that he saw that portrait, he marked that word, and has recognized and pronounced it. It is therefore certain that he has been in Arabia, has known the accursed Frenchman, is sensitive to alarm in the matter."

"My friend," said Freeland, "it is true that you have rendered me some excellent service to-night, and I am grateful for it. But it is very evident to me, first, that your masters, the Forettis, set you upon my heels to follow and spy upon me; secondly, that you have some purpose of your own in view which may injure me; and, thirdly, that you are very insolently interfering in a matter which concerns me and my daughter. You have a note to which you have no right. I demand it."

The Arabian smiled scornfully.

"Oh," cried Freeland, growing angry, "I know that you are thrice as strong as I am, but fortunately there is an invention which places the weakest man, if he be brave, upon an equality with the mightiest."

With these words the smith thrust his hand be-

hind a mirror on the mantelpiece, drew forth a large pistol and presented it at the head of the Arabian, adding:

"The note! Give it to me, or you are a dead man!"

Perhaps Alaric had never been in more imminent danger of instant death than he was at that moment. Freeland was desperate when aroused, and the events of the evening had fired his blood almost to madness.

He began to hate this man, and with Freeland to hate was to injure. He could forgive the superior prowess of the Arabian, but not his lordly assumption in his own house.

A fearful suspicion arose in his mind, that perhaps, after all, the Arab was an accomplice of Miles Sherlock. Certainly, he was in the service of the Forettis, and they had some design against Harry Freeland in view, or why had this man followed him.

It began to dawn upon Freeland's mind that if the Woman in Black knew his secret, others might also know it. The angry aspect of the Arabian, as he pointed at the apparition, had not escaped his notice, or it would not have flashed upon his memory as it did.

It was very probable, then, that as the Arabian knew the Woman in Black, he might have learned from her that secret which Freeland had buried in his heart,—not the secret of his true name and the blight which had fallen upon it, but another and more important secret.

For long years, Freeland had held his two great secrets profoundly locked within his own soul, and yet within a few days several circumstances had happened, which seriously threatened to expose all.

These circumstances might be summed up as follows:

A woman, unknown to him, had appeared and covertly menaced him with exposure, at the same time uttering his real name.

After a lapse of several weeks, the face of that woman had again appeared, spying in his window.

He had that day, impelled by a mysterious dream told him by his daughter, visited the saloon of two artists, strangers to him, and by mere chance, or driven by fate, seen these portraits, which filled him with terror.

He had been attacked in the street by a band of ruffians, whose purpose undoubtedly was either to murder him, or to bury him for life in the horrible mines.

He had been dogged through the streets by an emissary of the artist, who possessed the three portraits.

This emissary had rescued him from the ruffians, and by him been led into his own house.

This same emissary certainly had recognized the Woman in Black as a former, if not present, acquaintance.

This Arabian, for purposes of his own, or in the service of the Forettis, whom he must now regard as enemies, had secreted upon his person a note no doubt written by Miles Sherlock to his daughter.

Lastly, this Miles Sherlock, beloved by his daughter, and more to be feared than every other dread, was the leader of the ruffians, and if not in league with the woman in black, or with the Forettis, or with the Arabian, was a man who, of all the men upon the earth, should never become the husband of Rouletta, nor be beloved by her.

From these causes, therefore, Harry Freeland, driven into desperate rage, and already chafed by his quarrel with his daughter, aimed his pistol at the head of the prince, and exclaimed:

"Give me the note, or you are a dead man!"

The prince did not move a muscle of his tall figure, when thus suddenly confronted by a menace of instant death. Only his eyes, calm, resolute, defiant, turned steadily upon the angry face of the desperate man.

He was too well experienced with danger, in every shape, not to know that if he attempted to rush upon Freeland's weapon, when his finger was upon the trigger, a bullet would pierce his brain. Skilled as he was in reading the faces of men, he knew that the smith intended to shoot him dead, and with no delay, if he refused to give up the note, and yet he resolved not to part with it until the eyes of Vellino Foretti had perused it.

Keeping his eyes steadily fixed upon those of his adversary, he began to take the note from his vest.

"Father!" exclaimed Rouletta, wildly, springing between Freeland and the Arabian, "commit no murder! Do not shoot him before my eyes!"

"Would you rather that I should read the note than see this man dead upon the floor?" demanded her father, forcing her aside, but not losing his aim at the prince.

"Yes, oh, yes! Anything rather than see a murder done. I will tell you all that is in the note. I swear to you I will!" cried Rouletta, struggling in vain to reach the hand which held the pistol.

"You might speak falsely," replied Freeland, hoarsely. "My life may depend upon knowing what Miles Sherlock has written to you."

"No, it cannot! Your life! Heaven, what a suspicion!"

"Or that which is dearer to me than my life," said Freeland, "the honour of my daughter! What would my life be worth if you lost your honour? What care I for the life of a man, or of a thousand men, if I can save you from the villainy of Miles Sherlock? Back, girl, or you may aid this man to slay your father. If once his grasp touches me, he can tear my head from my shoulders. Back, or my blood may be upon your hands, Rouletta!"

Appalled by the hoarse vehemence of his voice and the terrible meaning of his words, Rouletta sank down and covered her face with her hands, not daring to look upon the deed, which she saw crouching like an enraged tiger in her father's eyes.

Not for an instant during this excited dialogue had Freeland's hand lowered the fatal aim he had taken, nor had his gaze flashed from its object. Had the muzzle of the weapon fallen or turned aside the fraction of an inch, or had his eyes for a second moved from those of the Arabian, the latter would have smitten him prostrate.

Notwithstanding that the prince seemed so calm and careless, every muscle and sinew of his active frame was tightly strung for a bound, such as only he could make, at the throat of the smith.

Freeland knew this fact, for he was a veteran in affrays in which human lives hang upon a hair, upon the flash of an eye, the quiver of an eye-lash. He knew already the formidable strength and activity of the Arabian. He had felt his grasp twice; he had seen him leap, in that room containing the three portraits, like a leopard over chairs and tables and clutch him irresistibly.

"The note!" he exclaimed, in a deep, hoarse voice, "the note! If the word three twice passes my lips, and I have spoken it once, you are a dead man. One—two—"

Rouletta stopped her ears with frantic hands. Already she thought she heard her father pronounce the fatal word; already the report of the pistol seemed crashing through her brain, and she shuddered fearfully, as she expected to feel the jar of a dead man falling headlong—shot, murdered in her presence.

Freeland did not repeat the word three. The pistol was not discharged, for even as his tongue pressed that word upon his teeth, the Arabian extended his hand with the note in its palm.

The wary smith did not lower his aim until his left hand had grasped the note; nor even then, for, still covering the head of the Arabian with his weapon, he said:

"Now, depart alive while you may. For the favour you did me I thank you. Learn hereafter that though Harry Freeland may be subdued, he cannot be kept down, and if ever he catches you or your accomplices, whoever they may be, watching him, he will not wait to count one before he stops your spying with a bullet. Go, and thank your Prophet that you escape so easily."

The prince smiled haughtily and left the room, Freeland following him with levelled weapon until he had passed from the house into the street.

There he paused until he lost the sound of his vanquished adversary's retreating footsteps, when he locked his gate, re-entered his house, locked and barred the front door, and returned to his parlour.

Rouletta was seated again at the table, looking pale, yet resolute. The stormy scene through which she had passed, and it seemed to her that it had burst upon her dream of love like a tempest, had somewhat exhausted her frame, but not dimmed the brightness of her eye, nor subdued its defiant expression, nor shaken her confidence in him whom she loved.

While her father followed the Arabian, she had risen from her posture of terror, and, kneeling where Freeland's heavy heel had crushed the likeness of Miles Sherlock, collected with her soft and beautiful hands the shattered remnants of the miniature.

These she had placed upon the smooth surface of the marble table, and, when her father returned, was gazing at them with mournful, yet not tearful, eyes. It was strange that, during all her bitter quarrel, no tear had moistened her splendid eyes. It was strange that, as she contemplated the result of her father's violence, no tear fell to bedew the shattered relics before her.

Freeland had remarked the hard dryness of her eyes, even as he rebuked her, and it struck his attention when he re-entered the little parlour.

"They had had many a sharp quarrel before, and tears of anger, with tears of pleading, had ever been Rouletta's most effective weapon in beating down the sturdy and generally violent opposition of her father."

But to-night she had not shed a tear. Resolute, obstinate pride had kept her beautiful eyes dry and defiant. But once only had their expression softened, and that was when she begged her father not to slay the Arabian.

No tears even then, nor when she sunk upon the floor overcome by fright.

"If she would only cry a little," thought Freeland, as he closed the parlour door and paused as her eyes flashed from the shattered miniature to his. "When a woman begins to shed tears, there is a chance for peace, one way or the other. Either the man will yield, or the woman will surrender her whim as hopeless. But Rouletta has not shed a tear to-night, though I have exploded like a human Vesuvius. That looks very bad to me. She has become petrified with passion for that Frenchman—that Miles Sherlock. My child is bewitched."

Like most men of exceedingly fiery natures, Harry Freeland's wrath, though violent and frequent, was short-lived. A rush, a roar, a stamp, and, perhaps, a blow, though never the latter against his daughter, and then deep repentance for his wrath.

His contest for the possession of the note had diverted his anger from Rouletta, and the triumph he had obtained in routing the formidable opponent, whose superiority had twice humiliated his pride in his own great strength of hand and limb, softened his heart towards his rebellious child.

He was sorry, very sorry, that he had quarrelled with her, and his soul groaned within him as it flashed upon his mind that he had never opposed her love for Miles Sherlock, except with violence.

"It was because I so hate that man," he thought, in self-exculpation. "It is because he is Miles Sherlock, or, rather, it is because Miles Sherlock is—what I shall never dare to tell Rouletta. If it were any other man in the wide world, now! even if it were the Arabian, —but Miles Sherlock! Great heavens! how strange it is that he and Rouletta should have met and loved, for I verily believe that, though he is a villain, and a deeper one cannot be found, he is madly in love with her, and she with him, and, though for reasons that I know, she can never be his wife, he would rather see her dead than the wife of another."

He still paused at the door, the handle in his hand, and the note surrendered so reluctantly by the prince in it too, looking steadily at the defiant eyes which met his gaze, daring him to say violent things.

"Poor child; she little knows or dreams of the fate I would avert from her life! Obstinate, defiant."

Yet I must crush this love as I crushed the miniature; ay, and even though I crush her heart as I did that bauble. Come, I have tried violence in vain. Suppose I try persuasion, mildness, affection. Alas! Rouletta has never loved me as a daughter should."

"Well, sir," said the object of his thoughts, impatient at his silence, "you have conquered that strange person, but you have not conquered me."

"There! She throws a challenge in my teeth!" thought Freeland, sadly. "It is plain that she will not bend to violence. I could never beat her, never. True, I am very brutal in my words and manners towards her sometimes—I know that—but I thank heaven that I never struck my child, and I thank heaven for that, because something tells me that I shall lose her ere long."

He left the door and replaced the pistol behind the mirror, Rouletta saying as he did so:

"Oh, you do not intend, then, to try the pistol on me, as you did on the Arabian? Thank you."

"No, I have been too violent, my child," he replied, in a low and very sad tone, as he sat down at the table, near her side. "Let us not quarrel again, but discuss this affair pleasantly."

"Pleasantly, indeed! Then, as you are, no doubt, ashamed of all that you have said and done, first give me the note."

"No; I must read that, my child," he said, gently —so gently that Rouletta stared at him for a moment in wonder.

"Perhaps that Arab tamed you," she said. "The Arabians are said to be famous tamers of wild animals. I congratulate the man, whoever he may be. So you will read the note, though I have sworn to you that I will tell you all that is in it? Very well; but I warn you that its contents will act upon you as fire does upon powder. There will be an explosion."

Gazed at her excited and beautiful face for a moment, with no passion in his eyes, only love and deep sadness, muttering:

"Poor child! If I but dared to tell her all! Would what I could tell and prove to her, kill her, or destroy her love for him? I dare not tell her—not yet—not until every other means fail."

He placed the note upon the table, saying:

"There is the note! I will not read it. I will trust in your promise to tell me what he says. Or, my child, if you regret that promise, and wish you had not made it, throw the note into the fire. There is the note."

"I see it, my father," said Rouletta, gazing alternately at it and at him.

The note lay upon the table between them—a crumpled, wrinkled, soiled and lifeless thing. But Rouletta remembered well all that Miles Sherlock had written, and her mind's eye recoiled from it as if it hid a serpent.

Had her father continued to be rude, violent, vociferous, loud in speech, wild in gesture, with his angry face inflamed and swollen, as was but too often his mode of convincing her of his superior wisdom, then she could have read the note—read it tauntingly, spitefully, and tossed it in the fire, with stinging words of defiance.

But there was a depth of true and devoted, boundless and pure love beaming in his eyes, softening his harsh voice, making truly graceful his gestures; so that, for the first time that evening, tears of contrition sprang to her eyes, and as she leaned over the table, they fell upon her father's strong and tanned hand.

"Come," cried Freeland, kissing off the tears upon her cheek, "you may love another, but yet you will love me!"

"Yes, father, and my heart reproaches me because I cannot love you as you should be loved. Read the note, father."

"If I do may the fiend fly away with my bellows," exclaimed Freeland. "Throw the thing into the fire! Come, I will not even let you tell me what is in it—"

"Yes, you must know, for you suspect, and as you suspect, you may do me and him great harm—"

"Stop! don't excuse him—yet you are right. It is no wonder that he loves you. But let us say no more to-night—"

"Yes, let us say all that we can say to-night. But first, since you will not read the note, let me read it for you."

"As you please, Rouletta," he replied, very anxious, it must be confessed, to hear what was in the note, and yet willing, in his sudden repentance, to be left in ignorance. "I shall not lose my temper—oh? you are sobbing! Come, confound the note, and—oh—"

He was about to add:

"And the villain that wrote it," but remembering that this might not pacify affairs he finished by saying:

"Well, since the note must be read—let us read it to-morrow."

"It would then be too late," replied Rouletta, subduing her emotion, and opening the note. She unfolded it, looked upon this side, and then upon that, then, with an exclamation of wonder, raised her eyes to those of her father.

Freeland's rugged face was expressive of amazement.

The note was blank. There was not a particle of ink, not a word, not a letter in it. It was simply a crumpled, soiled scrap of blank paper.

The Arabian had deceived the smith.

"What does this mean?" cried Freeland, snatching up the paper and eyeing it wrathfully. "Eh?"

"It proves that the stranger was as cunning as he was powerful," replied Rouletta, who now knew why the Arabian had smiled so significantly as he was marched off by her outwitted father.

"I do not understand yet," said Freeland, staring first at the paper and then at his daughter.

"Why, he deceived you. He pretended to give you the note you demanded—but gave you this instead, kept the genuine, and went away laughing at you."

Then Harry Freeland turned deathly pale, and clasping his hands tightly together, exclaimed:

"It is as I feared! Some one is hunting me down!"

With these mysterious words he bowed his head upon his breast, and stared vacantly at the carpet.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Arabian, after leaving the vicinity of Freeland's house, moved with long and rapid strides through the dark and deserted streets, holding his course straight towards the house of the Forettis.

Since his arrival with the artists in the city—and there had been in it several months—not one of the many visitors to the Foretti studio could say that they had ever seen Alaric in the streets during daylight, and yet he threaded his way through narrow and obscure streets with an ease and speed which proved his familiarity with them.

To be thus familiar, he must have become acquainted with them by diligent practice, especially to know them so perfectly, and as no man could say that he had ever been seen to leave or to enter the residence of the Forettis, those exits and entrances must have been made with careful secrecy.

No doubt that he had walked the streets and visited various places by night and in disguise, or he could not have passed as rapidly and unerringly as he did from Freeland's cottage towards his home.

Twice on his way he was accosted by ruffians who thought to rob him, and as often his immense strength and agility cleared the path of such dangerous obstacles.

It was no uncommon event in the mysterious life he led for him to encounter those who hide by day and prowling by night, who lurk at the entrances of dark alleys, or at the corners of obscure streets, to spring upon the unwary and unprotected, so that he attributed the two attacks which had been made upon him to separate bands of thieves, such as are usually harboured in the quarter of the city through which he was passing.

But when a third attack, more formidable than the others, was made, and evidently not simply to rob him, but to murder him, it flashed upon him that some vindictive and pertinacious enemy was at work to destroy him.

The result of the first attack had armed him with a stout bludgeon, loaded at one end with lead and iron. This weapon he had wrested from one of his foes, and with it prostrated or put to flight the whole party.

In the second attack the same weapon beat off his adversaries.

It was in the third attack that he recognized voices among those who fell upon him as belonging to some who had already been his assailants.

It may seem strange to the reader that the Arabian, when thus attacked, did not try to alarm the police; for, though he could not speak, he had power to utter loud cries, which could not fail to attract attention.

But he had no desire to call for such aid, and, besides, if he had been able to shout for help, he knew, from experience, that it would come too tardily to be of any value, and that, from his inability to give rapid and articulate explanations, he would be asked to go with the police, if any came—a proceeding which would consume much time, and probably cause him great embarrassment.

It was not strange, however, that the clamour of these assaults, in which men uttered fierce cries and savage oaths, did not attract the attention of the police, for at the time of which we write they were a mere sham, and too often in league with the thieves and vagabonds of the city.

The attempt to kidnap the smith had failed, as we have seen, and greatly to the surprise of him who had planned it, owing to the unexpected interference of the Arabian; and, in order to keep direct to our story, we must go back to the moment when the leader of those who attacked the father of Rouletta uttered an exclamation of surprise, as a flash of lightning revealed the features of the Arabian, and darted away in precipitate flight.

This man, whom the reader probably recognizes as the lover of Rouletta Freeland, was not of that inferior composition which pales and trembles at sight of a single enemy, nor one to turn his back upon odds; yet, as he recognized by the glare of that lingering, quivering flash, the features of a man whom he had, for nearly twenty years, supposed to be dead, a sudden terror impelled him to turn and fly.

Had a spectre of his most mortal enemy risen before him, Miles Sherlock—for he it was—would not have been more frightened.

Forgetting Freeland, forgetting his prostrate accomplices, forgetting everything except the fact that he had seen a man whose desire to meet and slay him must be limitless, Miles Sherlock bounded away in the darkness at headlong and reckless speed, until he had quickly placed many a yard between himself and the Arabian.

At first he fled with a dread of swift pursuit, and it was not until his breath began to grow short and thick that he remembered that he wore a mask, and that, therefore, though he had recognized an enemy, it was impossible that his enemy had recognized Miles Sherlock.

This reflection caused him to halt abruptly, and, with a curse upon his cowardice, he looked about to discover where his terror had carried him.

"I must take breath," he thought, as he leaned against the nearest object, which chanced to be an old yawl boat, resting upon its gunwales. "No man could run as fast as I have for ten minutes, unless as badly frightened as I was, or unless a desire for revenge put the speed of a young greyhound into his feet—such vengeance as that man must yearn to wreak upon me. Where am I? I ran without heeding my course, so that I escaped from him. So," he added, peering about and judging of the locality by the dim lights burning here and there, "I am near the river's edge. Come, it is well that I remember that I wear a mask, or I should have run headlong into the river. I am somewhere near the market. I suppose mere instinct directed my course, for while I ran, I thought of but one thing—escape."

He drew a long breath, as if nearly exhausted, and laughing a low, forced laugh, as if angry with himself, muttered, loud enough to be heard, if any listener were near:

"Escape from whom? From one whose power I scorned and defied, when his hand with a gesture could unsheathe ten thousand scimitars. Yet I fear him more than I did then. Why is he here? How long has he been in this city, and can he be seeking me? I would I had him here, on this lonely spot, I'd make amends for being put to flight by his glance. How came it that he rescued Freeland? Can it be possible that he and Freeland are friends? How fear can make a man a fool! How now! I have you! Who are you? Speak, or I will beat your head to a jelly against this boat!"

These sudden and fierce threats were addressed to someone who had crept near him and touched his arm.

"Peace! Would you murder a woman, and that woman your best friend?" replied a sharp, female voice.

"Who are you? No matter if you be a woman, some women are my bitterest enemies," said Sherlock, sneeringly, as he held the thin wrists of the speaker tightly in his strong hands.

"Are you afraid that I may thrust a knife into you, Miles Sherlock," asked the woman, "that you hold my hands?"

"Why not? Other women have tried to put their knives into my heart and poison into my wine. So you know my name?"

"Your name is Miles Sherlock. You may have a hundred. But had I wished to harm you, could I not have stabbed you as easily as I gently placed my hand upon your arm?" demanded the unknown, whose wrists Sherlock continued to grasp.

"No."

"No? And why not?"

"But who are you?"

"The Woman in Black."

"So we have met at last," exclaimed Sherlock.

"It was you, then, who wrote me that letter?"

"I wrote you a letter telling you where to find the handsomest maiden in London—and you found her, did you not?"

"Yes, the blacksmith's daughter—and you signed yourself 'The Woman in Black,' replied Sherlock.

"Yes, I found Rouletta Freeland, thanks to your

letter. Certainly, but for that letter I never should have dreamed that so humble a cottage held so rare a beauty. But why did you address that letter to me, to Miles Sherlock? Why not to a score of others whom I might name? What am I to you?"

"You are Miles Sherlock, that is all. Now free my hands, or I may be your friend no longer."

"My gentle lady, whoever you may be, you must have a name—"

"Yes. The name I signed in the letter."

"The Woman in Black? Yes, but that is not a name, and there are hundreds of women who wear black in London, as well as elsewhere. You and I must be better acquainted ere we part, my lady. I received that letter, and I have tortured my brains to bewilderment, trying to fathom the mystery. You certainly took great interest in my affairs to single me out—"

"Free my hands, and I will tell you that which may make you remember that there are more serious things for Miles Sherlock to think of than the name of 'The Woman in Black.' I was not far from you when you and your ruffians attacked the girl's father."

"Go on. You have more to say," said Sherlock, sternly, "or you would not have begun by warning me of what you saw."

"I saw the man from whose face you fled, go homeward with the smith."

"Then you know that man?" demanded Sherlock. "It is very dangerous for you to admit that you know him and me, and that I fled from him, for that proves that you know something of my past life connected with his."

"His name is Alaric, and he is an attendant of the Italian artists—the Forettis. I know no more of him. He frightened Miles Sherlock. I saw that very plainly, and needed no flash of lightning to tell me, for I can see as well in the dark as by day—"

"And through a mask too, since there is one on my face, and yet you know me. Come, though you have served me in discovering a perfect gem of beauty, I think you are a spy. You know too much of Miles Sherlock, for him to sleep easy, and know so little of you."

"Then you can sleep easy?" asked the unknown, in a voice which thrilled with bitter feeling.

"Yes; why not? Perhaps you are some dame or damsel who has loved and been beloved by Miles Sherlock, and being neither loving nor beloved now, are playing a little role of vengeance. Come, my dear Woman in Black, we will go to that lantern which swings on the wharf. I must see your face before I trust you farther."

"I know it is useless to attempt to resist your strength," said the woman, yet holding back with a tenacity little expected by Sherlock, when he turned to drag her towards a lantern not far off. "You are very strong, and I am only a woman. You can force me to that lantern, of course; but, unless you lift me in your arms, you shall drag me, and if you drag me, you may kill me. Listen—the man from whom you fled, is an attendant of the Forettis; he has gone with the smith to the house of the latter, but he will soon return, on his way to the residence of the Forettis. You have instructed every policeman on the route between the two houses not to appear, in case of an alarm. You did this in order to effect the capture or death of Freeland, but that plan has failed. Yet, Alaric, as the Arabian is called, will return along that line, or, at least, along a portion of it, far enough as he leaves Freeland's house, or as he approaches that of the Forettis, to be dealt with as you please, and the more violently you deal with him, the more you will serve me."

"So! Then you hate this Arabian!"

"I hate him. I would rejoice in seeing him dead this very night," replied the stranger, fiercely.

There was something in the tone of the speaker which made Miles Sherlock start. What that something was he could not tell, yet a shudder a chill ran sharply through his veins.

Hitherto, during this rapid dialogue in the dark, the voice of this woman, who called herself the Woman in Black, was marked by Sherlock only for its shrill hoarseness, unlike in tone or accent to any that had ever been familiar to his ear. If a disguised voice, it was certainly so admirably disguised that it was unsuspected by Miles Sherlock, a man experienced in detecting false voices, and skilled to a miracle in disguising his own.

But when the unknown uttered those words:

"I hate him. I would rejoice in seeing him dead this very night!" the sharp harshness of her voice deepened to a tone which thrilled upon Sherlock's ear, like the voice of one he had seen perish years before.

He had not been simply a spectator of the death of her whose voice for an instant seemed to have entered the lips of this strange woman, as she spoke those fierce words. His had been the hand which caused that death.

"So you hate him, my lady friend," he said. "And why?"

"Have you time now to listen to a long tale, which could hardly interest you at any time?" demanded the Woman in Black. "Were it not better for the pleasure of each of us, that you hurry back and set your hirelings upon the watch for the return of this Arabian. No doubt he is your enemy, or you would not have fled from him."

"You may be as dangerous an enemy to me as he."

"Why? Have I not acted as a friend? Did I not discover for you the most beautiful woman? Does not Miles Sherlock live only to enjoy the society of beautiful women? Repay my service by furthering your own desires. Remove my enemy—no matter how, I care not. Send him away, as you had planned for Freeland—I overheard your conversation when the smith was in your power. So that you remove this Arabian, I care not how it be done. But you have no time to lose, for he must not enter the house of Freeland, or if he enter he must remain but a few minutes—"

"You will aid me?" interrupted Sherlock.

"Aid you? Aid you to put the Arabian out of the world? Of course I will. Yet how? I am but a woman."

"True; nothing but a woman, my lady, yet a very sharp one, since it seems that you know so much of Miles Sherlock—too much for his safety, for there is not a man of all who serve him who knows that he who pays them so liberally, and uses them so boldly, is Miles Sherlock, the gentleman."

"Will you not act when chance has put the life of your enemy in your hands?" demanded the stranger, impatiently.

Miles Sherlock paused a moment, and then said:

"I will act, and immediately. I do not know who you are, and you do not choose to tell me; but I will find out, as sure as you and I live. I warn you that if you use the knowledge of me which you may possess, be it much or little, against me, or reveal my name to any of the scoundrels it pleases me to use, I will finish you. Now go—hasten to the cottage, to Freeland's—see if the Arabian is there, and hurry back to meet me. Haste, and we will see what can be done."

He released the woman and she glided away like a spectre, muttering, but not so loud that the words reached Sherlock's ear:

"To be well rid of two hated enemies, use one against the other."

Thus it was that the attacks were made upon the Arabian.

The Woman in Black, whose face had appeared at the window of Freeland's, as we have related, met Sherlock as he had commanded, flitted by him like a ghost, so suddenly did she appear and disappear, saying as she passed:

"He is coming!"

Sherlock, who had intended to capture her as soon as she had given him the desired information, grasped at her in the dark, but missed her.

She had anticipated treachery; she had crept upon him. She was determined that his hands should not imprison her wrists again.

She delivered her mission, and the deep darkness swallowed her up.

"Curse upon her!" muttered the baffled Sherlock, as he saw that her capture was impossible. "Had I not been certain to hold her here, I would not have let her loose. But she will be shrewd if she evades me many days. 'The Woman in Black?' I wonder who she is. But let me attend to the Arabian."

As we have informed the reader, the first attacks were easily repulsed by the prince. Those who fell upon him little suspected his prowess, agility, courage and wariness, nor had they a knowledge of his experience in encountering peril in every shape.

The third attack was more formidable; for, as the report of the results of the others reached Sherlock, who had not participated in them personally, he hurriedly, by means of his authority, stationed nearly a score of men, armed with clubs and bludgeons, at a point in the course followed by the Arabian.

Still Sherlock himself did not lead this attack, nor was he present except at a distance, not because he lacked personal daring, for no man more desperately bold than Miles Sherlock could be found among all the dark and desperate characters who acknowledged him as chief, without even knowing who or what he was.

But he was wise, and knew that a random blow, stab, or bullet, might ruin his plans—plans of stupendous crime, which, besides the gratification of mere personal hates and dislikes, included the intended plundering of every bank in the city, as well as the sacking of the homes of its most wealthy inhabitants.

The third attack failed, as had the others; for no

sooner did the Arabian recognize some of the voices of his assailants as those which he had heard in the first attacks, than, instead of attempting to defeat these pertinacious foes, he fled with the swiftness of the wind, and every effort to overtake him was useless.

Instead of pursuing a direct course, as hitherto, towards the house of the Forettis, he made an immense circuit, running for a time almost straight back towards Freeland's cottage, and then sweeping around towards the river; then back into the most densely-populated portion of the town, until, after half an hour's flight, he paused at the rear entrance of the Foretti mansion.

Here he remained for several minutes, motionless in the deep shadow, listening, as if he feared that some spy might be near.

Hearing nothing, for the hour was approaching midnight, the night tempestuous, and the streets deserted, he resolved to enter the house.

We have said that no one, unless we except Vasco and Vellino Foretti, had ever seen Alaric quit or enter that house, since the first day of the arrival of the three in the city.

That he did not leave and enter it at his pleasure, the domestics of the house had no doubt, for some of them suspected that they had passed the tall and stately form of this mysterious attendant of their employers in the streets at night.

But how he quitted or entered, or how he contrived to do either without their knowledge, was beyond their power to guess.

There could be no underground passage, for the nature of London made that impossible.

But it is necessary that we should reveal this secret of the Arabian to the reader.

(To be continued.)

TREES AND SHRUBS AND SEATS FOR CROWDED STREETS.

THE vegetable creation consists chiefly of carbonic acid gas which it has absorbed from the atmosphere. The organs of trees, shrubs, and plants, imbibe air during the day, while the light of the sun is most active and vivifying, and at night their functions in this respect are largely suspended. They take in and retain the carbonic acid gas as their food, and return the oxygen gas pure to the air.

There is always more carbonic acid gas in the air in dry than in wet weather, and more of it present during hard frosty weather, because the soil, which is at those times less absorbent, imbibes it less freely. There is also more carbonic acid gas in the atmosphere of urban or town districts than of suburban or country districts, and more of it in the higher than in the lower strata of the air near the ground in the latter districts. This is owing to the large cultivation there of trees, shrubs, and plants, which absorb this gas from the air near the surface.

This fact shows that the atmosphere of crowded streets in cities and towns could be relieved of a great portion of the deleterious gases it contains if rows of trees and shrubs were to be placed along the lines of the footway kerbs, along the cab stands, and round public urinals. They would be no more obstructive to traffic than the lamp and other posts are; and a short seat for two, here and there, by a lamp, or a post, or a tree, would be a boon to many a weary traveller. The trees and the shrubs would not only absorb much of the carbonic acid gas in the air, but they would also seize and appropriate much of the noxious gases thrown into it by the breathing of animals, the combustion of fuel, the exhalations from the sewers, and the pest-stratum formed by the escape of gas from the pipes under the streets. While the trees and shrubs were absorbing these noxious gases they would be at the same time exhaling pure life-giving oxygen gas, and thus they would tend to equilibrate the air, or to preserve its salubrity.

A few minutes' rest under the shade of a tree when one is tired is as refreshing as a drink of water when one is thirsty. The Builder did much to promote drinking-fountains, will it urge the placing of trees and shrubs and seats in crowded streets? The improvements now going on along High Holborn to the City, and at other places, afford excellent opportunities for doing what I propose should be done.

J. P.

CHEAP CHAMPAGNE.—In one of the London courts a Mr. Cox, the other day, sued a Mr. Barnett for damages for having supplied him with a defective machine for making champagne, and recovered the sum of 35*l.* in addition to 75*l.* paid into court. It appeared during the trial that by the aid of the machine in question an effervescent compound of port, sherry, madeira, Hungarian wine, and sugar, can be made "equal to champagne of the highest brand;" with this slight difference, that it has a cloudy or milky appearance, and that it blisters the lips and

throats of the unfortunate individuals who swallow it. A machine of this kind, capable of producing 100 dozen of Silvery champagne a day, costs 13*5*l.** and the champagne can be turned out at the price of ginger-beer.

STATISTICS.

ROGUES AT LARGE.—The latest returns issued from the Home Office record the number of the criminal classes at large in England and Wales in 1886 at 113,566—viz., known thieves and depredators, 22,806; receivers of stolen goods, 8,075; suspected persons, 28,580; prostitutes, 25,914; and vagrants and tramps, 33,191. In the Metropolitan police district, including the City, the number of habitual criminals at large was 14,496—viz., known thieves and depredators, 2,734; receivers of stolen goods, 199; suspected persons, 2,290; prostitutes, 5,554; and vagrants and tramps, 3,719. The chief enemy, however, with whom the 7,538 police stationed in the metropolitan district and City of London have to do battle—and which includes such notorious fraternities as the "Kent-street forty thieves" is that returned under the head of "known thieves and depredators," numbering 2,734—viz., 2,080 males, of whom 510 were under 16 years of age, and 654 females, of whom 129 were under 16 years of age. In the metropolis, including the City, there was a decrease in the total number of the criminal classes at large in 1886 of 2,540, or 14.9 per cent., as compared with the number for the preceding year, but the increasing prevalence of street outrages would lead to the inference that the class of known thieves and depredators—recruited from the remaining 11,762 criminals at large in London—is increasing. The returns relating to the whole of the country show that, although the number of habitual criminals at large and known to the police in England and Wales in 1886 has decreased 3,060, or 2.6 per cent., as compared with the number for the preceding year, yet in each of the classes of known thieves and depredators and receivers of stolen goods the numbers show a slight increase. Although it seems a startling assertion that there is one person of known bad character to every 222 of the inhabitants of London, yet the metropolis appears to hold the first place in having the smallest number of the criminal classes at large in proportion to the population. In the seats of the small and mixed textile fabrics, including Norwich, Nottingham, Derby, &c., the proportion is 1 in 154; then follow the seats of the cotton and linen manufactures, including Manchester, Preston, Bolton, Stockport, &c., 1 in 141; the seats of the woollen and worsted manufactures, Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, &c., 1 in 118; the commercial ports, such as Liverpool, Bristol, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c., 1 in 110; the seats of the hardware manufacture, including Birmingham, Sheffield, and Wolverhampton, 1 in 109; towns dependent upon agricultural districts, including Ipswich, Exeter, Reading, Shrewsbury, Lincoln, &c., 1 in 93; and the pleasure towns, Ramsgate, &c., 1 in 79. The houses which are the resorts of those who live by dishonesty and vice must be fully known to the police in every district, and effective measures for the repression of such houses cannot fail to produce an effect in the diminution of crime. In the number of such houses, as shown in the returns for England and Wales in 1886, there is a decrease, as compared with the preceding year, amounting to 440, or 2.1 per cent., and extending to each description of house except tramps' lodging-houses. In the number of houses of receivers of stolen goods the decrease is only 10. In the houses the resort of thieves and prostitutes it is 340, or 5.1 per cent. In the number of houses of ill-fame, 138, or 2.6 per cent. The total number of houses of bad character was 20,249, including 2,318 houses of receivers of stolen goods, 5,592 tramps' lodging-houses, and 5,528 houses the resort of thieves and prostitutes—viz., 2,069 public-houses, 1,975 beer-shops, 352 coffee-shops, and 1,132 other suspected houses. In the metropolis, including the City of London, the total number of houses of bad character was 2,216, including 153 houses of receivers of stolen goods, 480 tramps' lodging-houses, and 357 houses the resort of thieves and prostitutes. The number of convicts released on tickets-of-leave in each of the years ending the 31st of March, 1861-67, was as follows:—In 1861, 1,645; 1862, 2,380; 1863, 1,764; 1865, 2,425; 1866, 2,253; 1867, 1,793. In the number for the 31st of March, 1867, there is a decrease of 460, or 20.4 per cent., the decrease being with regard to the males 328, or 17.5 per cent., and with regard to females, 132, or 34.1 per cent. From 1856-67, 17,219 convicts have been discharged on tickets-of-leave. Owing to a change of date in the returns no information is given for the year 1864, which is therefore excluded in the above numbers.



[THE FIGURE IN THE WOOD.]

WEIGHT OF A SECRET.

CHAPTER I.

REESE STANHOPE settled himself in the end of his pew one bright Sunday morning in September, in his usual nonchalant, aristocratic fashion. Clara and Florence were elegant; Mrs. Stanhope looked the very pink of dowagers in her dove-coloured moire with bonnet and gloves to match, her fair, rather haughty face calm and smooth as a girl's. She prided herself upon her youthful looks, and in this case there was something to be proud of. Then she enjoyed the fact of her children being handsome, especially this young man in his mauve kid gloves and neck-tie, his polished collar and immaculate linen shirt-front fastened with a single superb diamond, his proud face that was not weak, but replete with manly beauty. He always came to church on Sunday mornings to please his mother. At eight-and-twenty he still held her in high esteem, and made some efforts for her sake, which in his secret heart he considered bores.

He joined in the responses; indeed, his rich, deep voice was a great attraction to the ladies in his vicinity. The calm face betrayed no emotion of any kind, however. It was pure habit with him.

Then the air for the chant began. His lips compressed themselves involuntarily now, and his fingers tightened a little over the cover of his prayer-book. But what was this?

A rich mezzo-soprano voice, rarely, strangely sweet—a voice that stirred all the hidden pulses of one's being, and made them quiver with an emotion in which was blended joy, triumph, pathos, and despair. As if the story of one's life could be revealed in those deep, swelling tones.

Others listened and looked. A few braver than the rest faced the organ gallery. Reese Stanhope

did the first with his whole soul, but he was too well-bred for the latter. Never in his whole life had prayers, lessons and sermon seemed so long. He was actually growing impatient for them to end. That sweet, wonderful voice stirred every nerve in his body, and wrought his soul up to a great height of expectancy. He could hardly believe it when he found himself walking down the aisle, and managed to pause in the vestibule until the singers came down. One figure alone was strange. A tall, slender woman, her bonnet and face covered with a large square of pale silvery tissue, instead of the coquettish little lace veils mostly in vogue.

A long blonde curl strayed over her shoulder. She was pale herself, except the curved line of her scarlet lips. Just as she was passing him some one trod on her dress, and she made a sudden halt, their eyes meeting as she turned her head. Reese Stanhope's lazy, indifferent, purposeless life vanished in an instant. The change surprised him so much that he stood quite still.

"What are you waiting for, Reese? Don't you see the carriage?"

Clara's voice was a little eager. A strange expression flitted over the singer's face as it was lost in the crowd.

The Stanhopes drove home in their luxurious vehicle, and discussed the music first of all.

"I hope she will remain," said Florence. "Her voice is exquisite, and so well adapted to the church. I haven't enjoyed a service so much for a month. I do wonder who it can be!"

Nearly everyone else in Greythorpe wondered for several days. Then it was known that it was a Miss Roosevelt, the new music teacher at the seminary, and that Mr. Markham, the organist, was quite confident of making an engagement with her.

Reese Stanhope bit his lip when he heard this. A teacher of music, simply. But he began to long for

Sunday, and when reclining in his great easy-chair, he shut his eyes, and let the music of Miss Roosevelt's voice float in upon his brain.

They were rather busy at the Stanhopes'. October was to usher in Clara's bridal day, and the house was full of workwomen and goods of every description. Reese stipulated that they should not invade his room; the bustle was rather distasteful to him, and he had the habit of taking long rambles through the beautiful autumn woods.

One afternoon he came out by Mr. Garth's. The rectory was a cosy, rambling old house with a spacious lawn and garden, and a background of dense shrubbery. There was a group of girls in a corner busy with croquet. A tall, slender figure, with the face turned aside, was watching them. He recognized it at a glance.

Mr. Garth rose from his arm-chair in the porch. He could get on delightfully with Mrs. Stanhope, but he stood a little in awe of the young man. So now he bowed politely, uttered a few commonplace remarks, and then was fain to subside.

Mr. Stanhope had no intention of allowing him to do so. He began about the beauty of the season and the fineness of the changing foliage, and presently the two were walking down one edge of the lawn to look at a magnificent tree in the sunset glow. The worthy rector was much pleased at his success in entertaining such a guest. He had not seen much of Mr. Stanhope since his arrival from abroad.

They approached Miss Roosevelt, who stood erect and proud, with not the slightest change of colour in her pale face.

She had already become a favourite with Mr. Garth, though the two had scarcely a feeling in common. "Have you met Miss Roosevelt?" he inquired, resolving to venture upon an introduction.

"No." And Mr. Stanhope paused for the ceremony.

Miss Roosevelt bowed loftily. She certainly was able to match the Stanhope pride. Both thought of that first morning in the church vestibule, and she flushed unconsciously.

There are some very curious mental revolutions made as we proceed in life. Miss Roosevelt's reflections were rapid and elastic. A sudden splendid possibility dawned upon her, but the flash of vivid light served only to make the surrounding darkness more visible.

Reese Stanhope glanced at her with his deep eyes, that could detect every varying shade without seeming impertinent. Under some circumstances she might be a very handsome woman. Her figure was tall and elegant, moulded with that subtle Greek sinuosity you sometimes observe in a statue, but she was a trifle too thin. Her features were delicate and regular, her hair, as I have said before, of a pale golden, and her eyes, when you examined them closely, very curious indeed. Light blue most people termed them, but they were prismatic, holding in their far depths a concentration of rays.

They reminded Mr. Stanhope of a changeful summer sea glinted over with sunshine. There was some secret of pain and suffering in their depths, that gave them an apprehensive expression. How he discovered this fact I can hardly tell, except that there was something electrical between the two natures.

She stood there cold and self-contained, taking no part in the conversation save a brief answer when she was addressed.

Now that the rector had made a beginning, his hospitality was boundless, though I confess he was amazed at himself, after he had given Mr. Stanhope an invitation to supper.

Mrs. Garth was a pleasant, commonplace woman, with a large share of tact, easy and affable. So the supper was a success. Afterwards they had some music in the parlour. Miss Roosevelt sang in the most matter-of-fact manner, but with an air that was almost disdainful.

"This is a new life to her," Stanhope thought.

He was turning over the leaves of the music, and came to a Miserere.

"A favourite of mine," he said. "Will you oblige me?" and he placed it on the piano.

When the first note of his mellow tenor voice blended with hers she glanced up. I don't know what wordless entreaty came into her eyes, but he seemed to gain a glimpse through the mask she wore. A sudden rush filled his pulses. Was it hope or fear, or that rarer and more subtle knowledge—love?

Twilight was setting in when the Garth girls bade their schoolmates a rather noisy good-bye at the gate. Miss Roosevelt lingered, secretly hoping that Mr. Stanhope would leave them, but he appeared in not the slightest hurry. And when at last she rose to go, he proposed to escort her home.

"It is hardly necessary," she said, coldly. "The distance is very short."

"Still, as I am going the same way, I suppose you will not object," and he smiled.

So they walked together. The only reference Miss Roosevelt had brought to Greythorpe had been from an eminent professor of music. Mrs. Orton had not been critical, however, and great, generous, good-hearted Dick Orton believed from the very first that she was a princess in disguise. Her own bearing had given her a social position already, as much, perhaps, as the fact that she sang in church.

Clara Stanhope's marriage, ten days after this, was the great event of the place. The excitement speedily subsided, and left Reese Stanhope in a mood to speculate upon Miss Roosevelt.

He had not been able to follow up the acquaintance because she resolutely denied herself all society. The only intimacy she had formed was with the Garths.

She felt so perfectly at ease with Mrs. Garth that it was a solace and a comfort to go there.

Christmastide, with its work and festivities, thawed this unseen barrier, however. And somehow she seemed to grow brighter and more human. Through it all she had a consciousness that Mr. Stanhope watched her curiously. It gave her a strange thrill of joy and an equal pang of apprehension, terror.

One evening he proposed accompanying her home. She declined gracefully.

"Mr. Orton attends to me," she said, carelessly.

Dick Orton was her shadow; he had remarked that. He could not imagine such a thing as love between them, and yet the slight familiarity annoyed him.

"I ask it as a favour," he said, pointedly. "Are you afraid? Have I forfeited my claim to be considered a gentleman in any respect?"

"Oh!"

And she made a sudden pause with her exclamation, then glanced furtively at him.

"I would like to prove myself a friend, at least. Why do you distrust me?"

"I do not."

She was trying to make her voice appear cold, but the effort and the failure caught his quick ear, for now his intuitions were electrically swift.

"Well," he said, abruptly, "let us go then."

Miss Roosevelt felt the power of a stronger will than her own. At first she was inclined to dispute it, then the fear of an ignominious defeat rushed over her. So she wound her veil, with its bright blue edge, around her proudly-poised head, and drew her shawl closely up to her throat. What a weird picture she made in the dim light, her eyes lustrous as stars, and a faint drift of colour wavering about her cheeks like a shadow of flame.

Reese Stanhope was roused in every nerve. Perhaps her quiet, persistent evasion of him had heightened his determination. At all events he was resolute enough now, and she, reading this in his face, trembled.

They passed down the broad staircase, the heavy matting rendering their footsteps noiseless. But there some one said good-night, and wondered a little at her attendant.

The clear crisp air blew in their faces. Overhead the sky was of a cloudless blue.

"Miss Roosevelt, why are we not friends?" he said, in a tone whose softness rendered it courteous.

"It is not necessary, Mr. Stanhope."

"Do you distrust me?"

"The word is too strong to be used between mere acquaintances. It presupposes some necessity for faith."

"And you have resolved to admit none."

She laughed a little, though it came from her lips only. It was not scornful, yet had an unpleasant ring. "Three months ago we spent a very pleasant evening together. Why have you shunned me so persistently since? It is not merely vanity when I say that I believe you were not displeased."

"Whither was this drifting her. The hand resting on his arm trembled; she felt it as well as he did."

"Mr. Stanhope," and she made a strong effort, one that seemed to wrench her very soul, "this discussion is simply absurd. Our paths in life lie widely apart. We have nothing in common."

"Nothing!" He turned and faced her so suddenly that the usually pale face was in a glow of surprise. "I think we have," he said, slowly. "The mere fact of our stations in life being different shall not stand in my way. I love you."

He uttered the last words with a strange warmth and vehemence, strongly in contrast with the tone at the beginning.

"Hush!" she said, almost fiercely. "You must not say this to me."

"Why? Since it is true, do you think me afraid to utter it? I would have waited, would have won you in the slow, gentle fashion most lovers use, but how

could I, when you held yourself for ever aloof? And now it has come to this. Does the blame rest with me alone?"

He let his voice fall to its most dangerous pathos. She was absolutely crying, cold and strong as she considered herself. But something in this touched the finest chord of her soul.

"You are very generous," she said, presently. "I fancied you, of all others, would be first to recognize the difference in our social position. For it is a fact. Your family would not approve of your choice, and since my path has been marked out for me, let me walk in it."

"Is it utterly impossible for you to love me?"

He turned suddenly again, and the drifting light of the moon betrayed her secret. It gave him an intense thrill of joy to know that she was not entirely indifferent to him.

"If you will say that you never can love me," and he tried to steady the delight that beat tumultuously through his pulses, "I must believe you, then, and resign the sweetest hope of my soul. And if you do not, I shall take it as assent."

For a moment there was an almost deathly stillness between them. The words she should have uttered died away on her lips. To drink one such draught of bliss as was held to her longing soul was worth all the rest of life.

Was she answerable for what had befallen her in the past? In heaven's sight she was clear and free from stain, and it seemed cruelly unjust to suffer for the sin of another.

"You know nothing about me," she said, presently. "Since I was nineteen I have been orphaned, and compelled to rely upon my own exertions. I am twenty-three now."

She shuddered with some old recollection. He thought it was a remembrance of the past struggles, and resolved upon a bright life for her in the future.

"I love you," he said, briefly, "and that makes us equal."

Then they resumed their walk. There was the little cottage staring at them in the white moonlight. Down the road sounded a coming footstep.

"Good-night. I have hardly established my claim, and done myself scanty justice, but in the days to come I will make amends."

Some strange misgiving seized her. She clasped his hand.

"It is all like a dream. I think you have spoken hastily, and if in calmer moments you should regret it, I want you to consider yourself perfectly free."

Then she would have left him, but he drew her nearer, and kissed her trembling lips with passionate fervour.

"I am not so generous," he said, with his adieu.

On his homeward way he revolved the strange conversation in his mind, quite astonished at himself. An hour ago declaring love had been farthest from his thoughts. He did not regret it now, for he certainly had not meant to trifle with Miss Roosevelt; but he had pictured to himself a piquant, alluring friendship, ending in a tenderer passion with time. It was done, however, and he faced the matter boldly. There would be some opposition at home, yet he was very confident of overcoming that. Miss Roosevelt was but half won as yet.

She excused herself to Mrs. Orton, and ran up to her own room.

There was a smouldering fire upon the hearth, but she soon blew it into a bright blaze. Then she crouched in the ruddy light, as if she longed to read the future in the glowing flames and mass of vivid coals.

Did she dare take this wonderful fortune held out to her so suddenly? Again she asked herself if she had any right to be happy like other women, and again the hard injustice of making her accountable for the crime of another, answered her. The one who had sinned was dead, and she was free. Why confess it then?

She had comforted herself many times with the thought that it was blotted out; to drag it up again then would only freshen it in her own memory, and give the man she loved a hard burthen to bear.

Presently she rose, and taking from a bureau-drawer an odd, steel-bound box, she brought it down there in the blaze of the fire. The key was appended to her watch-chain, and never left her. She opened the box and took therefrom a packet of letters, not more than half-a-dozen, tied with a black ribbon that made her shiver as her slender fingers touched it.

No choice, dainty correspondent this. The paper was coarse and poor, the writing irregular; now and then a word or a capital beautifully and boldly formed, but most of it tremulous as if from sickness or age.

She did not care to read them over. They belonged to a period that she was glad to escape. She

could cherish tender memories of the man lying in a nameless grave, and heaven bore her witness that she did, but these were not pleasant relics to keep. It was the last link that bound her to any old life.

She dropped them slowly into the fire, one by one. Then the ribbon curled and writhed in the flame, and presently fell into ashes. After a while the brightness of the flame began to die out, but she did not heed it, for her hands were clasped over her eyes, and she was far away in a realm of dreams.

With an effort she roused herself. "If I had wealth and station," she murmured, softly, "was where I once had a right to be, I should accept his love without a fear. As it is, I will wait patiently, giving him little hope and keeping myself free from fascination. If such a boon should come to me at last—"

She did not dare pursue her thoughts any farther. Every moment they became more unreal, and she began to wonder if it were not all the work of imagination. Besides, to-morrow had its duties, and now it was past midnight.

Miss Roosevelt was pale and nervous the next day, and gave a quick, sharp glance into each face that she met. When evening came, every nerve was in a quiver, although she seemed so outwardly calm and unmoved.

She would not go down to church, she told Dick Orton, and yet he lingered in the cosy sitting-room, though he knew his presence was indispensable. How strangely beautiful she looked with that bright colour coming and going on her fair cheek. And Dick repressed a rising in his throat as he remembered Mr. Stanhope's attentions. Perhaps it was just as well for her to remain at home. But somehow there came a great gulf between them, and then he knew from what motive he had watched her through the past months—not merely curiosity.

The day had been a peculiar one to Reese Stanhope. Most of it had been spent in his own luxurious room, under a pretence of answering letters and attending to some business matters. Just at dusk of the short winter day he had taken a brisk walk, then lingered over his dinner and dessert, studying his mother's pride and elegance with a curious eye. What would she say to Miss Roosevelt as a daughter? And then he thought of the high-bred air he would have instanced anywhere else as an indisputable sign of birth. Surrounded by ease and happiness, this young girl could easily blossom into beauty. He recalled the singular charm he had found in her during that first meeting at Mr. Garth's, and even farther back, on the Sunday he had heard her sing. Some powerful influence had been drawing them nearer together, silently but steadily.

Yet he wondered a little how they would meet, and with this thought in his mind he rambled down to the attractive centre for the young people. He found a charmingly industrious group, but the one he sought was not there.

And so it came to pass that before the evening was half spent, Mrs. Orton, much amazed, ushered him into the little sitting-room, and the simple-minded woman saw no occasion to play propriety; therefore the two were left alone.

A feeling of terror, almost helplessness, fell upon Miss Roosevelt. The dignity and distance she intended to use at the next interview failed her entirely, for she was overwhelmed by the secret consciousness that this man loved her, and meant to treat her as honourably as he would the greatest lady in the land. It was not possible to affect to misunderstand him.

"You see I have not repented," he said, gaily, with a bright smile.

"There has been hardly time."

She experienced a strong impulse to withdraw herself from his immediate influence. She almost distrusted the plans she had formed for her future.

Reese Stanhope could be very fascinating when he chose, which was but seldom. He seemed to feel that this woman meant to contest his power over her, and therefore he roused himself out of his habitual ease and indolence. She found him wary and practised, resolute in the exercise of a certain subtle strength.

Miss Roosevelt was not a coquette, neither had her ambition taken a matrimonial turn. If she had not believed it possible to worship this man with her whole soul, she would have discarded him in a most direct way. Had he been poor and possessed the same charm for her, she would have yielded without a struggle, conscious that her motives could not be misinterpreted.

But as it was, she was forced to yield. He would have the assurance he sought. He made her confess that she believed love between them possible, and demolished her objections in a very summary manner.

"I told you last night that I was quite alone in the world, that I had no birth or family of which to

be proud. You will doubtless be censured for marrying a woman without any antecedents."

She uttered this with dignity, though through her nerves sped a thrill of hesitation and fear. Had anyone a right to this secret that she was for ever thrusting out of sight?

"You have warned me, certainly; but I still feel impelled to venture upon my path of peril. I have a fancy that my own happiness is of greater importance to me than the commendation of the world."

He looked so handsome and winning as he said this, so brave to dare, that whatever misgiving had before found entrance into her heart, now vanished completely. Yet she would not consent to a positive engagement. Mrs. Stanhope should see that she was in no haste to entrap her son.

Though she was resolute upon this point, he won from her some other concessions that were most gratifying to his impatient lover's heart. He could call the quick colour to her fair face, and he watched the drooping lids tremble over the eyes, that were vainly trying to hide their joy out of his sight. Already she loved him, but this was a mere foretaste of what he meant to win.

By degrees the whisper found its way around Greythorpe that Mr. Stanhope had found a strong attraction in Miss Rosevelt. Mr. Garth had half-surmised the truth.

"It will never do," he said to his wife. "It's hardly likely that he means to marry her, and she is too fine and noble a woman to be trifled with. I must warn her, for she seems to me like one of our own."

"Mr. Stanhope is a gentleman," Mrs. Garth returned, warmly, "and I'm sure Miss Rosevelt is worthy of any man's love."

"But his mother—"

At this Mrs. Garth smiled. She did not stand much in awe of this great personage. A simple, natural, affectionate woman, love affairs possessed a great charm for her.

"My dear," she went on, persuasively, "I think I would do nothing at present. Miss Rosevelt has clear eyes of her own, and is not likely to be deceived."

And secretly Mrs. Garth inclined towards Mr. Stanhope.

The tidings were not long in reaching Mrs. Stanhope. The earliest she disbelieved utterly. First and last, Reese had indulged in several lazy fancies, and she was too wise to encourage this by open opposition. But when it came to be a kind of acknowledged fact, she could no longer hold her peace.

"Reese," she said, one morning, in a careless tone, "what is this foolish rumour about you and Mrs. Haven's music teacher? It's best to be careful with rustic belles, as they are apt to magnify attentions."

He laughed. As well meet the issue now as any other time, he thought.

"I don't know that the attention can be magnified in this case," he said, with a steady voice. "Tell me the rumour."

"It was perfect nonsense, I knew," and yet her smooth brow clouded a little, for there were certain resolute lines in his face. "That you have been tangled in a mesh of golden hair, and beguiled by a siren voice."

"And won by a heart sweet, womanly, and noble, they should have appended, to make the story true."

"Reese!" She was pale and shocked.

"I asked Miss Rosevelt a month ago to marry me. She, more generous than I should have been, refused her assent, until I had wisely considered the subject."

"You can withdraw!" The mother's lips were white and tremulous.

"Not with honour. I hold my manhood too high for that. If Miss Rosevelt will consent, she shall be my wife as soon as she is ready."

"A woman you know nothing of—"

"A woman I love."

It was the first time Mrs. Stanhope and her son had ever come into collision. Once or twice she had taken special pains to interest him in some visitor, invited with a purpose that she kept well in the background. Easy, affable, and possessing fine tact, he had rendered himself agreeable without straying into the net.

This stately mansion and elegant grounds were her son's by right, and he was quite independent of her, but hitherto she had found him so pliable, that she could hardly believe he would disregard her wishes now. She exerted herself to the utmost; she tried to convince him, appealed to his pride, his love for her, and he was tender, but firm in this one resolve.

Reese was really fond of his mother; perhaps with less love on both sides, it might have ended in a rather serious rupture. But after a week of tears and entreaties she still found him persistent.

"Since he is resolved to marry Miss Rosevelt, we may as well make the best of it," she said to her daughter Florence. "It is very mortifying that with his advantages he should not look higher."

"But, mamma, she certainly has the air and manner of a lady. If she has no relatives and is poor, it may not be altogether her fault. They say at school that she can converse in several different languages, and her voice is magnificent. I'm sure she's stylish, even in her plain attire, and most people rave over those pure blonde women. After she has been Reese's wife a year, no one will think she ever taught music."

"Rosevelt is a good name," Mrs. Stanhope said, plaintively.

Reese eventually had everything his own way. Mrs. Stanhope came to tea at the rectory, and met Miss Rosevelt. Perhaps she liked her the better for her pride, that seemed to hedge her about and render her unapproachable in certain respects. She would be met as an equal, not patronized. On the whole, the interview was a success.

The mother and daughter were driven home in their carriage. The lovers lingered awhile in the cosy bay-window, and then rambled leisurely towards Mrs. Orton's cottage. Some old doubt had fallen over Elma Rosevelt, rendering her strangely silent. Yet she clung closer to her betrothed, for each day he seemed to become more and more a part of her soul.

"Your mother spoke of my name," she began, after a long pause. "It is a good old name, but I have always meant to tell you that it was not my father's. My mother ran away and married him in her early girlhood. He was kindly-tempered, generous, but weak. She has been dead many years. He and I kept together, sharing good and ill fortune, until four years ago—"

Her voice faltered to a tearful pathos and stopped. She was trembling in every nerve.

"My darling," he returned, tenderly, drawing her closer to him under cover of the night, "do not distress yourself with these old memories. All that is gone. Whatever his faults may have been, let them rest in the grave with him. Your heart and life are all I want."

"Heaven knows that my soul and my life have been kept pure and stainless," she exclaimed, with sudden vehemence. "I am not afraid to accept any man's love—I am as worthy as other women."

It seemed a strange protest against some unseen danger. She paused in the path and turned her face towards him. Even in the dark he could see the wonderful sweetness of his expression, and kissed it with passionate fervour.

"My father's name was Rothsay—much alike, too much for good fortune, my mother was told."

If he had ever heard it before, no consciousness came to him.

"Then it is in your power to make a better change."

And she knew by the peculiar intonation of his voice that he was smiling.

With that she accepted her fate. Since it had come to her, why refuse? Again and again she told herself that she was worthy.

After this the engagement was no secret. Some approved, but more envied. That this girl should come to Greythorpe, unknown and poor, and draw its best prize, was not to be quietly borne.

Miss Rosevelt went on her way quietly. She had been proud and reserved before, so no one could accuse her of any change. Her duties were performed with the same unflinching regularity; her voice was clear and sweet on Sunday; but her evenings and her lover were her own property.

Dick Orton watched her with a strange interest, and a pang that was never to be confessed to anyone.

The most noticeable difference came in Miss Rosevelt's face. It brightened with a sweet, human tenderness, the old, weary, frightened look dying out. She grew really beautiful, not alone in Stanhope's partial eyes, but Mr. and Mrs. Garth, watching from the friendliest interest, saw her blossom into new sweetness.

Though Reese Stanhope felt disposed to hasten his marriage at first, she begged so for delay, and he fancied that a little patient waiting might have a judicious effect upon his mother, so he acquiesced the more readily. She wished to finish her year at the school; and perhaps another reason that she could not have explained, held her back. A subtle presentiment seemed hanging about her whenever she was left alone, as if a black fate would surely interfere, and dash this cup of bliss from her longing lips.

Spring came to Greythorpe, full of fragrance and beauty. Miss Rosevelt took long rambles through the woods, coming nearer and nearer to the great joy of her life. She liked to think of it in these dim, solitary places. There was an air of unreality about

it that accorded well with this vague promise of summer sweetness.

One afternoon she loitered longer than usual. It was early May, and through the piles of velvet moss tiny buds and blossoms were creeping, the outgrowth of this rank luxuriance.

She had gathered a handful—crisp red berries hardly larger than a pin's head, and waxen cups full of faint, woody fragrance. The sun sank down behind the hill before she was hardly aware of it, and then she began to thread her way out. She made two or three wrong turns, and smiled, thinking of the weird, enchanted forests of romance.

The path began to clear presently. Pausing, it appeared to her that she heard footsteps. Not her lover this time, though he occasionally met her in these rambles. Some belated traveller hurrying homewards; yet she cast a quick, questioning glance around.

A kind of hoarse, frightened breathing startled her, and she hurried towards the opening. But she only went nearer the fate lying in wait for her, and when it was too late, a gaunt, feeble figure tried to draw itself out of sight. For an instant she was as still as death, then she sprang forward with a wild cry.

(Concluded next week.)

SIR ALVICK.

CHAPTER XIV.

SIR ALVICK no longer refrained from wiping his brow. The sweat of guilt and terror rolling from his forehead, ran into his eyes, smarting and blinding him.

He remembered well the hush, the lull, the horror that had stilled the family feud, when the report first sped abroad of the finding of the body of Lord Hayward.

That it was in there in the drear solitude of the Tangle was no news to him, nor to trembling Sir Malcolm. But the tidings that it was found, although they knew it would be found, fell upon them heavily.

Sir Alvick, though full twenty-three years had passed since that memorable 22nd of June, remembered well how Sir Malcolm trembled and grew pale, when one of his servants rushed into Ulster library, saying:

"The marquis is dead. His body lies in the Tangle, and they say he killed himself!"

He felt a fearful reeling of the brain for a moment, but it had passed away. He felt it now, when Major Hark Varly's words recalled the reminiscences of that day: but the reeling of the brain did not pass away so readily.

He maintained a steady face, however, and met the flashing, menacing gaze of the soldier unflinchingly.

Hark Varly was neither judge, witness nor jury. He was only relating what he had heard. No doubt, thought the baronet, he heard it all from Aspa Jarles. No doubt he believed it all. It was all true, too, but Hark Varly could not prove it.

He said he could, but no doubt he merely boasted, hoping to terrify him, to force him to become his accomplice in depriving Lord Peter of the rich marquisate.

It was a formidable conspiracy, no doubt, but Sir Alvick could meet it. There could not be many concerned in the conspiracy, for it was scarcely less dangerous to all concerned than it might be to him.

He would continue to listen and hear all. Aspa Jarles was the witness of all Hark Varly had told, no doubt, but who was she? An infamous woman, of course, or she would not have fled from him with a fellow whose name Sir Alvick had forgotten.

This Major Hark Varly, too, would not have visited him to warn him, as it were, of the impending danger, were he certain of being able to prove all he alleged. No, he would have had him arrested at once, and turned the tide of popular opinion against him.

Sir Alvick, too, knew that he was not liked by the people in general, that especially he was detested by the Fitz-Osborns, Lord Peter excepted. Lord Peter was not liked, either, by those of his name, and were Hark Varly so powerful as he declared, it certainly seemed that it would have been wiser for him to have sprung this conspiracy, or whatever it was, true or false, without putting Sir Alvick upon his guard.

"There is a weak point somewhere in this line and plan of attack," mused the baronet, "a very weak point, if I can but discover it. I must watch for it."

"The body of the marquis was found," continued Major Varly, "and an immediate inquest held upon it. The coroner's jury, in doubt, and perhaps fearing

the displeasure of the Fitz-Osborns, did not bring in a verdict of suicide, but simply that Lord Hayward had died of wounds received from the hand of some unknown person.

"It was the general belief, however, at the time, that the unfortunate marquis had laid violent hands upon himself, and this belief arose no more from the attendant circumstances of his death, than from the late moroseness and morbid melancholy of the unhappy nobleman.

"There were some, also, who believed that a murder had been done, yet suspicion never for an instant pointed towards you or Sir Malcolm."

"You pause, young man, as if you have no more to say."

"I have much more to say, Sir Alrick, but I have no need to say much more at present. What I have said makes you tremble."

"Perhaps I have an ague fit upon me, from so long suppressing my anger, Major Varly," replied the baronet, sternly. "You have said much, far too much, and you have said nothing, literally nothing that will be proof in a court of law."

"This is not a court of law, is it, Sir Alrick?" retorted the soldier, with a disdainful glance around the small apartment. "But I know I have convinced you that I am well-informed of your crimes. I trust the time may not come when all that I have said must be repeated by others in a court of law."

"Yet you declare that you intend to possess your rights, as you call your plot."

"You are willing then, Sir Alrick, to have all that I have said proved in a court of law? Remember that all can be proved—everything."

"Of course, young man, I am not willing that all this audacious, this atrocious scandal, this tissue of well-put-together lies shall furnish gossip for the mob. Not that I at all imagine that a particle of your accusations can be proved, but because such things are extremely vexatious and mortifying to men of my rank, to say nothing of the feelings of Lady Matilda."

"Then, Sir Alrick, since you take so wise a view of the matter, what do you propose to do?"

"What do I propose to do? I propose to do nothing, young man. It is for you to propose something. Come, I see the drift of all this hurly-burly, Major Varly. You intended to frighten me into something—"

"Listen, Sir Alrick," interrupted the soldier, sharply. "I will tell you exactly and very briefly what I intend to do. I intend to advance my claims to the Fitz-Osborn title and estate—I do not say when, but very soon. I may do it to-morrow, or I may not do it for a month."

"Ah, you are not ready. There is something depending!"

"I am ready. It is you who are not ready, Sir Alrick. I shall advance my claims upon the so-called Lord Peter. If he refuse to vacate, I will then, as I shall be compelled to do whether he refuse or not, proceed to establish my claim by process of law. It remains with the pretended Lord Peter whether it shall ever be proved in public, that he is not the son of the late marquis. I have no desire to place the brand of illegitimacy upon his brow. Even were he—and he is not—the son of the late marquis, he would not be the legitimate heir. I am the first-born son of Hayward Fitz-Osborn, Marquis of Galmount. I desire only the establishment of my legal rights. I do not intend to destroy the good name of Lady Matilda unless I am forced to do it."

"If you can, as you assert, prove that you are the child Edward Charles, why should you desire to blast the reputation of Lady Matilda?" asked the baronet.

"Justice to the memory of my father might demand that I, his son, should brand as infamous the woman whose baseness nearly drove him mad, the woman whose plots with you caused his death," replied the major, with sharp bitterness. "But," he continued, gravely, "if I so brand her, the shame, the disgrace, which my unhappy father so much dreaded, while he lived, will centre about his tomb."

"I think of him, Sir Alrick, and remember his pride in the fair name of his house. Therefore, I say, if Lady Matilda will refrain from attempting to vitiate my claim I will not molest her reputation."

"You, then, expect that Lady Matilda, who idolizes her son, will quietly submit while you, unopposed, establish your claim as Edward Charles?"

"I do not say that I expect her to do so. I say that she must do so," replied Hark Varly, sternly. "Her reputation as a wife, as a lady, as a mother, depends upon her total silence while I establish my claims. There must be no opposition upon her part in favour of her son."

"I suppose you desire the same inertness upon my part?"

"No; I demand your active co-operation with me, Sir Alrick, in establishing my claims."

"My active co-operation!" exclaimed the baronet. "Your audacity is not content with heaping vile charges upon me, nor with asking my non-opposition to your pretended claims; it must needs demand my active co-operation!"

"Yes, or by heaven, Sir Alrick, I will have you arrested and convicted upon two capital counts—murder and bigamy!" said the major.

"Murder and bigamy!" thought the baronet, as these two terrible words were hurled into his face. "He will do it. I see it in his eye—in every feature of his face. He is resolute and daring because he believes he is right; because he is sure he can establish his claim. He makes no idle threat. Murder and bigamy! Two capital crimes—punishable with an infamous death! Even should he fail to prove the charges, my reputation and that of Lady Matilda will be for ever blasted. This may be nothing but a conspiracy, founded upon the chance knowledge of Aspa Jarles, but it is most formidable in its character."

"You are perfectly aware of the danger in which you are placed, Sir Alrick. I do not know that you have ever informed Lady Matilda's son of the truth. He may believe himself to be the son of the late marquis; if so, let him continue to believe it. Yet you and Lady Matilda must make him believe, also, that I am his elder half-brother, in that case. I leave that to you and Lady Matilda—"

"Stop, one moment, young man," interrupted Sir Alrick. "Now I do not admit anything that you have said to be true—anything more than is already known to the public. I do not intend to admit anything now, nor must you construe the question which I am about to ask as a possibility that I intend to admit anything now. I wish you to distinctly understand this."

"I perfectly understand all that you say, Sir Alrick."

"Then I will ask you this: If Lady Matilda and I were not to oppose your proceeding, and you were to establish your pretensions, were to be legally installed Marquis of Galmount, what guarantee can we have that you will not seek to avenge the fancied injuries of your fancied father? What guarantee?"

"None," replied Hark Varly, in a deep, crushing tone. "Not one, Sir Alrick, that does not restrain me now—respect for my father's memory."

"Can it be possible that this strong, filial principle has caused him to say all this to me in private?" thought Sir Alrick. "If this be why he has not thought his claims into a court of law, then he must, indeed, be well assured that he is the legitimate son and heir of the marquis."

"Dare you, Sir Alrick, infamous man, so-called husband of an infamous woman, ask from the son of your victim a guarantee, that you shall be unmolested in your villany? I said that I did not come here as a supplicant. I add that I did not come here to give pledges. I came to demand, and if you refuse, I will compel."

Sir Alrick, losing his prudence, in his rage, started up to draw his pistols. The soldier checked the act by instantly drawing his own with the rapidity of light.

"Take care, Sir Alrick. If you dare show more than the butt of the pistol I see, I avenge the marquis this instant."

"And would be hanged for the deed, young man," retorted the baronet, hoarse with rage.

"But you would not be alive to see it. Lady Matilda and her son would then learn why I avenged the marquis!" replied the soldier, calmly.

"Good heavens, in what a position am I placed!" thought the baronet, as he stared at the speaker. "Tell me what you desire, young man? Is it a colonel's commission? I can obtain it with a stroke of my pen. It cannot be possible that you really aspire to be made a marquis, one of the richest peers in England, next heir to the earldom of St. Alban's—you, a soldier of fortune, a—"

"A colonelcy," said the soldier, scornfully, as he drew a roll of parchment from his bosom and displayed it to the baronet. "Here is my commission as colonel in the queen's troops. Had I asked for higher military rank, the Duchess of Marlborough would have obtained it for me."

"Ah, and the duchess is no friend of mine," thought the baronet. "She no longer wields absolute influence over the queen, yet her relative, Mrs. Masham, does—and though Mrs. Masham and the duchess are bitter rivals, both hate me."

"Perhaps your purse is empty, young man—"

"No. I did not come here—and I repeat it for the last time—as a supplicant. I came to demand. You have heard my demands. I know they are sudden, unexpected, startling. But I make them. I will enforce them. If Mr. Hassan Wharrie has been here, and I think he has—I think I recognized his

tall, lean figure in that of the person who passed out just before I came in—if he has been here, he has made demands also. He will enforce them. But that is an affair between you and Mr. Hassan Wharrie—"

"You know him?"

"I have heard of him."

"From Aspa Jarles?"

"From Aspa Jarles, perhaps."

"She has admitted to you that he is her son?"

"More than that, Sir Alrick. She can prove that he is your son."

"My heavens!" thought the baronet. "This is worse than aiding Hark Varly to turn out Lord Peter."

"Sir Alrick," said the major, "I have said all that I intended to say at this our first interview. I will see you again. Reflect upon what I have said. I may not hold another interview with you, before you hear that I have begun legal proceedings to establish my rights. I have warned you. You had best consult with Lady Matilda as to your proper course. Indeed, you must, for if she moves in favour of her son, I will have you indicted for murder and bigamy."

With these terrible words, made still more terrible by the fierce power of his glance, the soldier returned his pistol to its place in his belt, as a token that the interview was at an end.

"One moment," said Sir Alrick, as he opened the door, and struck a small bell to summon Clement. "You spoke of a ring with an inscription. What became of the ring?"

"After Lady Matilda refused to wear it the marquis hid it, or destroyed it, or threw it away," replied the soldier, somewhat startled by the question.

"Will you not remain in Ulster Manor to-night, major?" asked the baronet. "It has become very stormy since—"

A keen, blinding, flash of lightning, accompanied by a tremendous crash of thunder, at that instant flamed around the room, chocking the words of the baronet, and making the great building itself vibrate from basement to turret.

The howling of the blast, the beating of the rain against the window, and the thunder-clap, added force to the remark of the baronet, and he renewed his invitation.

"You see! It is a storm, a gale. There are many spare apartments—"

"Thanks for your hospitality," interrupted Hark Varly, as his eyes assumed a cold and suspicious expression. "I have risked a short visit to Ulster Manor, and during our interview, which has extended to within an hour of midnight, you have twice laid your hands upon a weapon. I am too sensitive to accept the hospitality of Sir Alrick Ulster. I care nothing for the storm. If you do not see me to-morrow you may hear from me."

Clement entered at that moment, and Sir Alrick said:

"You would be unmolested in Ulster Manor, major. It is ten miles to Ulster borough, and a part of the road is not very good. We know that a number of robberies have been committed in this vicinity lately, and that a notorious highwayman is in the neighbourhood."

"You mean Ross Chafton?"

"The same, and he is a dangerous man to meet upon a night like this. If you will not remain, be careful to keep your priming dry and your pistols ready," said the baronet. "But show the gentleman to the hall, Clement, and bid someone see him mounted—I suppose your horse is under the shed, the avenue stable?"

"I suppose so. Good-night, Sir Alrick."

"Good-night, my dear young friend," replied the baronet, with a great show of friendliness, which amazed the soldier. "Take care not to forget my caution."

"I will not forget it," replied Major Varly, carelessly.

Hark Varly, with all his keenness and vigilance of observation, did not perceive, or if he saw, thought nothing of an almost imperceptible gesture made by the baronet to the silent, sly, tip-toeing Clement.

The baronet had made that gesture a thousand times, perhaps, to Clement—to Clement, the silent, the timid, the simpleton—and as many times had Clement understood and obeyed it. Sir Alrick merely fixed his eyes upon the dull, vacant eyes of his attendant in a steady, momentary stare and coughed. The act could scarcely be called a gesture; but it was a signal, a command.

It meant, in plain speech:

"Detain this person in this house for a few minutes."

Clement was used to the habits of his mysterious master. He never seemed to vex his brain with causes. He only obeyed, and if he ever reflected upon the causes of this or that, he said nothing. It was

sufficient for him that Sir Alvick desired him to obey, and he obeyed.

Major Varly, secure in his revealed and unrevealed power, left the apartment, and Sir Alvick was again alone, as he supposed.

He waited a moment, listening to the retreating footsteps of the major, until he heard them no more, and then he struck the bell, outside of his door, four sharp blows.

Hugh De Lisle, who had hoped to hear the door closed and locked, intending then to step from his concealment, remained motionless as before when he heard those four taps upon the bell.

"Sir Alvick does not intend to be alone, yet; I must wait," he thought, as he crouched behind the steel-clad effigy.

CHAPTER XV.

THE four taps of the bell were heard by the retreating major and Clement. The first imagined them to be simply a call for some servant to attend the baronet. The latter knew what they meant.

"Sir Alvick desires to see Lady Matilda, immediately."

It was a whim or a rule with Sir Alvick to be brief in his communication with the servants of the Manor. Hence, though they agreed that he was a churlish, haughty master, they feared him. He was not simply an arbitrary master. He was imperative, absolute—he was deaf to all petition when once he had resolved.

Clement had received his silent, though especial orders, to detain the major in the mansion as long as possible. He, therefore, as he showed the latter towards the hall, was revolving in his mind the best means to do so.

When the four taps of the bell struck his ear he turned towards the major, who was following him, and said:

"Will your honour remain here one moment, while I send someone to call Lady Matilda? The baronet desires to see her."

"Certainly, but be speedy, my man," replied the major, thinking:

"So he has already desired to speak with Lady Matilda! He is alarmed, and no doubt when he tells her all that I have said, she will be alarmed also."

He leaned upon the banisters of the flight of stairs he had just descended, thinking over all he had said—all that Sir Alvick had said—all that had been revealed by the features and actions of the baronet, as corroborating the serious charges he had made; wondering and hoping that Sir Alvick and Lady Matilda in their coming interview might resolve to yield to the pressure of circumstances, and decide not to oppose him; thinking of the causes which had led him to make these serious demands, yet confident that he would establish them—until he suddenly became aware that he had been left alone for several minutes.

Clement was exceedingly slow in returning, and when he did, the major had become very impatient and restless; so much so, that he had already begun to move forward, though unable to say whether he was about to pursue the proper direction or not.

"This way, your honour," said Clement, suddenly returning as if in haste, though he had been hidden in a shadow, waiting for the exhaustion of the major's patience, for some time. "Your honour does not know that Ulster Manor faces the east. This way, and we will soon be in the hall, where your orderly awaits you."

The major, moody in thought, followed the man silently, who moved on with a slow, deliberate step, ever mindful of the command of his master, delaying the major's departure as long as possible. When they reached the hall full fifteen minutes had passed since the baronet had parted with the major. His orderly was nodding in the hall as he descended, and Clement awoke him with a brisk shout of haste:

"Rouse up, man, your master is in a hurry! Will you open your eyes, booby?"

The sergeant stared at the speaker, rubbed his eyes, saw and recognized his officer, started up and saluted him with military stiffness.

"Our horses, Perryman," said the major; "see that they are led to the front. We must return to head-quarters."

"I will send a lackey to attend to them, your honour," said the wily Clement. "I will have them led up to the front, your honour."

"No need of that; it is getting very late," replied the impatient major. "It will take a snail like you five minutes to find a lackey, five minutes more to wake him, five minutes more to make him understand what he is to do, ten minutes for him to do it, and so it will be midnight before we are in the saddle. Go yourself, Perryman, for you have some acquaintance with the premises, I have heard."

"He is soft upon one of our maids," said Clement with a grin. "Here is a lantern, man. You didn't expect to do anything without a lantern, did ye? Wait until I light it, will ye? The wick is wet and won't light!"

Clement was no little time in lighting the candle of the lantern, and when he had, the major snatched it from his hand, saying:

"You are a simpleton, and have not the sense of a horse: come, Perryman—"

"Your honour, it will vex Lady Matilda and Sir Alvick, if so distinguished and noble a gentleman leave the Manor in this style," said Clement, with a wink at the hall porter. "Wait but a moment, your honour, and the horses will come to the front."

"Silence. We need no ceremony," said the major, moving towards the door.

"I'll bet a year's wages that old Caton has lost the key of the door," said Clement. "He has often delayed departing guests while hunting for the key."

The porter's hand was already upon the key of the door when Clement spoke, but as he heard the words he drew it from the lock, saying:

"Since that Ross Chafon has been flying about, I always keep the door locked, day and night, for they say that he is daring enough to try to rob the queen if she fell in his way. Where is the key? I vow I think I left it in this pocket—no, it was in this—no, it must have been—Clement, have you seen that key?"

"Not I, old owl. Why should I have seen your greasy old key?"

"Your honour," said the porter, in a drawing tone, while his fingers moved about his multitude of pockets. "The lads be for aye poking fun at I, hoidin' my keys and the loike—oh you bees mad leike!"

This remark was caused by a furious oath from the major, which startled the porter into a speedy discovery of the key, and a rapid unlocking of the door.

"You are a simpleton," exclaimed the major, as he and his orderly hurried forth into the howling storm.

The porter instantly closed the door and locked it, saying in a muttering way:

"Bad luck to you, Major Varly, for a desperate, reckless loon, that would as soon stab a man as a stag. It is your first visit to Ulster Manor, and please heaven, it may be the last! Clement, he is a fearful man, and a merciless one. I heard speak of him in London last year, when I went with my lady. She seemed to take a 'mazing fondness for him, too—Sir Alvick were at the wars, you know, with the great duke. I thought as how the time would come when the major—they say he be a colonel now—would put his handsome head into Ulster Manor."

Here the old porter paused to wink sagaciously with one eye, and deliberately with the other, eyeing Clement with a stare which said as plain as eyes could speak:

"I know something if I am an owl, my lad."

"Oh," said Clement, who was by no means of a silent and timid nature, when not in the presence of his master. "Then the major is an acquaintance of my lady?"

"Clement, you are young and green—green as grass and younger than the new moon," replied the porter, calmly settling his corpulence within the capacious arms of his huge leathern chair. "Would you have an old man like me prate of his betters? Go to! I have seen what I have seen, I have heard what I have heard, I have thought—abundance. What coil is this, that you hinted to me to be slow in letting the man of war depart?"

"I made no hint, Caton."

"Clement, I am a man of very slow movement, as I may be, seeing that I weigh some twenty stone or more—"

"Good three hundred avoirdupois," laughed Clement, who was of slight and feathery build, as suited his place in the household.

"Peace, since heaven maketh some fat and others lean. I am slow in getting up and in getting down, but swift to anger; lad of lightness, you speak falsely. You wanted me to be slow in letting forth the man of war—they say he has slain half a score of men in single combat, or by my heart, I would have resented that lifting of his tongue. What coil is it?"

"On my soul, Ben Caton, I do not know. Sir Alvick gave me the hint. I think he wanted the major to stay in the Manor to-night until he, Sir Alvick, might have secret speech with Lady Matilda. But since I have told you so much, pray tell me if this Major Varly knows Lady Matilda."

"Has she not often been to court? Is she not, though full forty years of age, a beauty still? By my legs, and they are large, there is no lady of her years as handsome as my lady, in all England. I do

remember well all the beauties of the court of Merry Charlie—King Charles the Second—he were grievous fond of good mutton and pretty ladies, my lad—I say, I do remember, for I be full three score and ten, all the beauties of the gay court of the Merry Monarch; yet may I die as thin as a herring if any of them, Nell Gwynne not excepted, was as handsome as Lady Matilda has been, and is yet, for all she must have counted forty years."

"Will you stick to the question, you rambling goat," cried Clement, impatiently. "Are Lady Matilda and this Major Varly acquainted?"

Old Caton's thoughts had rambled back to the rosy days of his youth, and heedless of the strange, and even excited inquisitiveness of the confidential servant of his master, he continued in a wheezy, fatty voice, while he leaned back in his great chair, and rested his heavy hands upon his mountain of fleshy rotundity:

"There were many beauties in those days. I mind the time, the year, and the day—fifty years ago, my lad, on the 29th of last month."

"Will you halt? I speak of the present, and not of half a century ago," cried Clement. "Are Lady Matilda and Major Varly acquainted?"

"Then, on the 30th of January, of the next year, my lad," continued old Caton, with no sign of response to Clement's excited eagerness upon his features—"just twelve years to a day, my lad, after—"

"Old owl! I speak of the present. Are Lady Matilda and Major Varly acquainted?"

"Of course they are. But mind that you hold your tongue, my lad—"

"No need to warn me of that, Caton. I have served Sir Alvick five years."

"And I ever since he became a baronet of Ulster—bad luck to the day!" growled the old porter.

"You hinted that Lady Matilda was somewhat fond—I mean, rather favoured this handsome cavalier. So they met at the court, while Sir Alvick was at the wars—eh?"

"To your roost, you starved crow," said old Caton, alluding to Clement's black garb and slender frame. "You are ever seeking for a grain of hidden corn that you may caw over it. You are as lean as that attorney who to-night came in—and does he abide in Ulster Manor?"

"How know you that he is an attorney? He wears a sword, and that is the mark of a gentleman."

"A fig for his gentility. I tell you that I have seen him in London, where my grand-daughter dwells. I knew him, when he came in. His name is Hassan Wharle—as ugly as his name—and he is a grandson of old Amos Jarles."

"Grandson of whom?"

"Old Amos Jarles, a lawyer, too—who stole off with one of the Fitz-Osborns, mayhap, less than fifty years ago. I remember well the coil and stir it made. Amos Jarles stole away with one of the aunts of Lord Hayward, the late marquis,—him, as they said, killed himself, though I have my opinion about that, my lad. That runaway pair had one daughter—very pretty she was, too—and it was rumoured in those days (some twenty-three or four years ago, my lad), that our present master was over-fond of her, so to speak, and not meaning to gossip,—a habit that servants of this house are abominably given unto, they said she—her name was Asps Jarles—they said she—what are you staring at?"

"Me? Nothing," replied Clement, whose face was blazing with eager attention.

"You speak falsely!" said old Caton, angrily. "You know my weakness, and you have been trying to pick me. Am I a goose, a pigeon, a pheasant, that you should try to pick feathers from under my wing for a pillow? Get you gone for an impudent, curious, inquisitive booby. You pick no feathers from under my wing."

Clement moved away, laughing carelessly, but thinking, as he returned slowly to his post above:

"I have picked a feather or two already, old tub, and I have picked more from Sir Alvick's keyhole—enough, I think, if I do but manage all with discretion, to fashion me a pair of wings to fortune."

"Here," cried old Caton, in time to stop the retreating valet, "come back."

Clement returned, smiling still very blandly, and with a careless air said:

"Well, old anatomy, what is it?"

"Where is Miss Evaline?" asked the porter, anxiously.

"In her room, perhaps. I do not know."

"Lord Peter has not gone forth. Will he remain in the Manor to-night?"

"I have not seen him since he came in. I know nothing of his intentions."

"My lad, there is foreign blood in your veins," said old Caton, eyeing the dark and conspirator-like face of the valet uneasily. "You are of an English mother, but an Italian father. There's more trick than fair

play in your eyes, and you have a snakey mouth. But perhaps your heart is all right. Miss Evaline has never let a night pass that she did not come to ask after old Ben Caton. Perhaps she is ill?"

"I think not."

"My mind misgives me that all is not moving for her happiness of late. She has looked droopy-like and melancholy."

"In love, perhaps."

The old porter shook his head and sighed, saying: "She does not love Lord Peter—a handsome man, too, but with neither the air nor the face of the late marquis, my lad. Lord Peter looks more like an Ulster or a De Burgh than a Fitz-Osborn. It has struck me that—but I never gossip. I mind Sir Malcolm well, poor man. He was a noble-looking man before the late marquis died, and full of fire, perhaps too fiery, but good and jovial. He drooped after the marquis's death, and yet, there was little love between them—what are you staring at, Pail Clement? To your room?"

Clement moved away, but again the old man called him back.

"Here. If you see Miss Evaline above, hint to her that old Ben Caton has missed the sight of her handsome face. Ah, me!" he sighed, as the valet departed. "I have never felt at home in this house since good Sir Malcolm died so suddenly; and he never was happy after the marquis died. They said the marquis killed himself, mayhap he did and mayhap he didn't. Mayhap Sir Malcolm killed himself too. Since Alvie Ulster came into the Manor, I have felt as if a snake was crawling about. May the Lord forgive us all for our sins! It is very strange how my mind misgives me about this visit of Major Varly—and that Hassan Wharke, too. What is he after? I may be wrong, but there was something in the style of the two who came with the attorney that reminded me of them London thief-catchers. It will be midnight soon, and then I'll be to bed. They all say I'm too old to be even hall-porter, but I remember that my father died in this chair, and please heaven I will too! I wish I could see some lackey moving about the hall. I'd get him to spy about above, and try to get some word from Miss Evaline."

(To be continued.)

CHINESE TAILS.—A correspondent writing from Paris tells the following story:—"I was in a hair-dresser's shop a few days ago when a man entered who offered for sale a large lot of Chinese tails—I mean human hair tails such as adorn the heads of the subjects of the Celestial Empire. The bargain was soon struck at the low price of two francs and a half per tail, and the vendor was encouraged to bring as many more as he could procure. The hair was coarse and black, and did not seem to me fitted to add to the attractions of any female head, so I inquired to what use it could be put. 'Use!' exclaimed the hairdresser; '*soyez tranquille*. I am not anxious about that. There is such a demand for hair just now that we are too happy to buy whatever we can get.'

ELEPHANTS IN ABYSSINIA.—Some of the elephants had to carry a load of 1,844 lb., or an 8-inch mortar (924 lb.), its travelling bed (168 lb.), its cradle (262 lb.), and the animal's own saddle and gear (500 lb.); 500 lb. is a terrible weight for even an elephant's saddle, and a cruel waste of the animal's strength. It would seem that the world is farther from the solution of the great pack-saddle problem in the case of elephants than in that of mules. The load next in weight was 1,760 lb.; the next, 1,616 lb.; the lightest, 1,414 lb.; and these loads had to be carried over a series of ascents and descents, some from 3,000 ft. to 4,000 ft., and with the gradient sometimes one in three, or even steeper. On one occasion, when the elephants were climbing the precipitous side of the Jeta ravine, a torrent of rain came down, and made the road so slippery that three of them slid back many hundred feet down the descent. Heavily laden as they were, they contrived to keep their footing and save themselves from falling over the steep side of the road that wound up the ravine.

ELOPEMENT AT COURCELLES PREVENTED.—Courcelles is famous for boarding-schools, both for ladies and gentlemen. A few evenings ago the head of one of the former was awakened about midnight by some gentle tapping at her window. She went upstairs, and saw from another window that a man had scaled the garden wall. Quietly descending, she opened the street door, and sought two policemen. One came with her into the house, and the other remained near the garden wall. The gay Lothario was induced by certain signs to come round to the hall door and possess his Juliet. He did so, and was immediately embraced by the policeman. He belonged to an embassy in the neighbourhood, filling the

office of a valet, and his sister, who is servant in the school, had conducted the arrangements for an elopement with a very handsome pupil, an Italian. Cabby, who was waiting close at hand, was overlooked, and some hours afterwards went to the police station to lodge a complaint as to his having been swindled, when he was shown his "fare," and detained to keep him company as a party to the abduction that was to be. Mademoiselle left next morning for Milan.

FACETIÆ.

AN ORATOR who had "wrought himself up to a lofty pitch of eloquence," exclaimed, "And now I'll conclude in the beautiful and expressive language of the immortal poet—poet—I—I've forgot his name, and—and—I—I've forgot what he said, too."

A YOUNG LADY complains that she became so interested in a young man who visited her, that while in his society she lost her diamond ring and found a brass one on her finger instead, and adds "that if the ring is returned she will ask no questions."

A LITTLE ORPHAN BOY, who was nearly starved by the stingy uncle and guardian with whom he lived, meeting a lank greyhound one day in the street, was asked by his guardian what made the dog so thin. After reflection, the little fellow replied, "he lives with his uncle!"

NEW TALE OF A MISER.

Tales of misers are numerous, and here is a new one:—A miser on his death-bed consented, after pressing exhortations, to make his will.

"I bequeath to my nephew—," said the notary, writing as he spoke.

"Bequeath!" said the dying man, "oh, don't say that!"

"I leave to my nephew."

"No! not that!"

"I give to my nephew."

"Give!" he ejaculated with horror, and by a violent effort raising himself, "give!—never—never!"

"Well, then, let us say lend. I lend to my nephew—"

"Yes," said the dying man, "but only for a time!"

"I lend to my nephew, until the day on which I ask him for it back, the sum of—," wrote the notary. The miser consented.

A YOUNG LADY was walking down the Boulevard Montmartre, accompanied by her mother, when a *gamin* called the attention of several passers-by to a long green veil attached to her hat, hanging behind her. This was made the subject of some remarks, and in a very short time a crowd of two hundred people had gathered round. The ladies were obliged to take refuge from their persecutors in a shop. Cannot a lady walk along the streets in Paris wearing a green veil without being annoyed by a people scrupulously polite?

THE EXACT TRUTH.

Two young masons were building a brick wall, the front wall of a high house. One of them, in placing a brick, discovered that it was a little thicker on one side than on the other.

His companion advised him to throw it out.

"It will make your wall untrue, Ben," said he.

"Pooh!" answered Ben, "what difference will such a trifle as that make? You're too particular."

"My mother," replied the companion, "taught me that 'truth is truth,' and ever so little an untruth is a lie, and a lie is no trifle."

"Oh," said Ben, "that's all very well; but I am not lying, and have no intention of doing so."

"Very true, but you make your wall tell a lie. And I have somewhere read that a lie in one's work, like a lie in his character, will show itself sooner or later, and bring harm, if not ruin."

"I'll risk it in this case," answered Ben, and he worked away laying more bricks, and carrying the wall up higher, till the close of the day, when they quitted work and went home.

The next morning they went to resume their work, when, behold, the lie had wrought out the result of all lies! The wall, getting a little slant from the untrue brick, had become more and more untrue as it got higher, and at last, in the night, had toppled over, obliging the masons to do their work over again.

Just so with ever so little an untruth in your character—it grows more and more untrue if you permit it to remain till it brings sorrow and ruin.

Tell, act, and live, the exact truth always.

FRENCH MODIFICATIONS.

The French have adopted many of our words, but have strangely modified them: of beefsteak they have made *bi-fleck*, of roast-beef *rosbif*; and so on. They are now beginning to use the word *speaker* for "make a speech," and *toaster* for "give a toast." They

have completely naturalized the words *high life*, and they write them (thus far) correctly, but they pronounce them *highliff*.

MOST LIKELY.—Is it because so many swells have "handles" to their names that they are called "knobs?"—*Punch*.

CAUTION.—Ladies who wear long dresses, and dislike their being trampled on, should wear upon their backs a card with the inscription, "No FOOT-LOWERS ALLOWED!"—*Punch*.

ONLY NATURAL.—They say that the War Office clerks are in revolt against *King Storks*. No wonder. They have been used to *King Logs*, and don't want a change of dynasty.—*Punch*.

NOT A MILITARY NATION?—In the prospect of a general election all England is one camp. The whole people, at least all the householders, are under canvas.—*Punch*.

A WIRE-DRAWN NOTION.—A Mr. String-fellow has been exhibiting a flying machine at the Crystal Palace. That is, his machine won't exactly fly, but it will move along a wire. Really the inventor ought to be called Mr. Wirefellow.—*Punch*.

LETTING HIM DOWN GENTLY.

Podgers: "D'see the lovely creature I danced last galop with?"

Smith: "Oh, yes—know her very well. Married to a confoundedly jealous fellow, who insists upon her dancing with the plainest men in the room."—*Punch*.

A PLACE VERY MUCH WANTED.—There are not too many employments in the public service open to men who are necessitated to earn their living by the pursuit of literature. The creation of an office for which skilled authorship would be a qualification is suggested by the disputes continually occurring on the construction of Acts of Parliament. The ambiguity and obscurity of parliamentary enactments is due to their not having been properly revised and corrected. To put the language of all bills into such order as to fit them to become law, Parliament wants an editor.—*Punch*.

OUR NAVAL ROLLING STOCK.—The Admiralty has provided us with ironclads deserving a name to match with that of Seely's pigs. In their course on a cruise they roll in a manner which entitles them to be called Reed's porpoises. We are too little provided by land with steam-rollers; and we have too many at sea: not enough to crush stones; more than enough to cut water. Britannia did at one time rule the waves; now she rolls them: and if she goes on rolling them with broadsides instead of turretships much longer, they will very soon be ruled by France or the United States, and even Germany may become more of their ruler than England.—*Punch*.

A FELLOW-FEELING.

Poor Man (to Swell emerging from Club): "No indeed, sir. Can't get any work, sir. Done nothing for months, sir; and you know what that is, sir!"—*Punch*.

WHAT WILL THE TEETOTALLERS SAY?—The Rev. Dr. Jelf, on retiring from the Principality of King's College, London, had a testimonial presented to him. You shall have as many guesses as you like, and yet you shall not find out what was selected to be given to a Doctor of Divinity on resigning the headship of a great educational establishment. A Theological Library? A set of clerical robes? A full-length portrait? A silver tea and coffee service? A candelabrum?—All wrong. They gave him (besides founding a Jelf prize, or scholarship, or something of that commendable character), "A Bacchanalian Vase!" This we can only suppose to be classical either for a claret-jug or a wine-cooler—a punch-bowl being of course out of the question! Which-ever it may be, we heartily wish the excellent Doctor many years' use of it!—*Punch*.

A RAINY PROSPECT.—A horticulturalist of our acquaintance declares that he shall strike St. Swithin out of his calendar unless it rains (s)within the period allotted to the saint.—*Fun*.

HOLD HARD.—Fletcher is gifted with such a retentive memory that he retains not only the contents of a book, but the volume itself, when it chances to be a borrowed one, as it usually is.—*Fun*.

WHAT WILL YOU STAND?—The papers report that the late rain (when was it?) has had a most beneficial effect on the standing corn. We trust that as a result the standing corn will stand something handsome.—*Fun*.

OPPORTUNE.—The news that there is a prospect of plenty of oysters this year is welcome. Of the announcement that young oysters have already been seen, it may be said, that it comes (s)pat at this season.—*Fun*.

HOW TO LENGTHEN YOUR DAY.—Parlola a loaf from the nearest baker's shop, you will then be taken before a magistrate, who, in all probability,

will give you two months:—on no account knock down and maltreat the first person you meet in the street, for that peccadillo you would get at the most seven days, and very possibly only be required to pay a small fine.—*Fun.*

DE-DUCED FAIRLY ENOUGH.—Louis Blanc has described Lord Granville's politics as "a liberalism of velvet." His lordship can afford to smile at the figure: "a liberalism of velvet is better than a conservatism of Sat'n."—*Fun.*

A VERDANT IDEA.—The number of persons who have been "warned off the turf" is much larger than is usually supposed. Every frequenter of our public gardens must have seen it notified over and over again that he is "requested not to walk on the grass."—*Fun.*

ROUNDING ON HIM.

Swell (about to settle his bill): "Oh, waiter, you don't object to an Australian sovereign, I suppose!"

Waiter: "Oh, dear, no, sir! Anything in the shape of money!"

Swell: "Indeed? Then I can let you have a box of gun-wads. No use now to me, you know, as breech-loaders are all the go!"—*Fun.*

TELL THAT TO THE MARINES.—The Secretary to the Admiralty has issued an order abolishing "white ducks," and substituting "blue serge trousers" for the Marines. The "serge" is of course very proper considering the semi-naval position of the force—"one foot on sea, and one on shore." But if the ducks are done away with, why should not goose-step perish with them?—*Fun.*

"HE LISTED IN NUMBERS."

It is proposed to number the organ-grinders and license them, in order to ensure their good conduct, and their punishment in cases of misbehaviour. The Bishop of Oxford on hearing of the plan said, that so far as he was concerned he had rather see the Exodus than the Numbers of the organ-men.—*Fun.*

A COOL NOTION.—The commentators of Shakespeare, with singular obtuseness, have hitherto failed to observe that the Bard of Avon was well acquainted with the uses of one of the luxuries of the present day, to wit—a freezing machine. That such, however, was the case clearly appears from the following passage:

"'tis the sport to have the engineer
Riced with his own petard." *Fun.*

We understand that the South Middlesex Volunteers are to be known in future as "Rachel's Own." Their crest is to be a Gold bag (or) surmounting a Bath (improper), and their motto is to be "Beautiful for Ever!"—*Tomahawk.*

The pent-up irritation of our legislators, hereditary and elected, is getting too much for them. It would be much better if some Saturday were at once set apart for a grand boxing-match between the Government and Opposition peers and honourable members. It would be a great draw at the Crystal Palace, say with fireworks, and—of course—Mr. Coward on the Grand Organ.—*Tomahawk.*

THE POOR PLAYERS!

That carnival of vulgarity and vice, yclept the "Royal Dramatic Revels" (in spite of some questionable influence exerted by a manager whom posterity, we trust, will allow to be nameless), was this year a dead failure! On a par with the disgusting "entertainment (???)?" specified was a common rag, evidently emanating (to judge from its contents) from the back slums of Grub-street, called with humour the "Royal Dramatic College Annual." We trust we have heard the last of an "entertainment (???)?" and a "publication (!!!)" which are alike disgraceful to the promoters and supporters.—*Tomahawk.*

MR. BABBAGE has come to be a bore. He is as great a nuisance to us as the organ-grinder seems to be to him. He has evidently no soul for music. Not for Joe has no charms wherewith to soothe his savage breast, and he refuses to be delighted with *Walking in the Zoo*. This is a sad and painful state of things, and we pity Mr. Babbage. To be ever appearing upon one stage—that of the Police-court—is monotonous: to be eternally playing upon one string is palling; to be constantly singing the threadbare song of *The Nasty Organ Grinder* is very ridiculous. For our own part, the Babbage nuisance is as great as the organ nuisance.—*Tomahawk.*

THE PEERS AND THE BOARD OF TRADE.—Lord Redesdale wanted to lay down a principle that no railway should be allowed to raise its fares. He said people have taken houses and built houses along particular lines in the expectation of particular fares, and they have a right to see those fares maintained. This is an extreme view. On the other hand, the free-trade view is equally extreme, and has this dis-

advantage, it overlooks the fact that though private enterprises the railways have reserved virtual public monopolies. The Marquis of Salisbury besought Parliament not to crush private interests, though he thought they ought long ago to have been absorbed in the State. Between these disputants came Lord Taunton with a reasonable proposal, that when a company wants to raise its fares the Board of Trade should report before Parliament even reads the bill a second time. This was carried, and the Duke of Richmond in the debate upon it warmly and successfully defended his department from the imputations of the cynical Lord Redesdale, who considered the Board of Trade to be given over entirely to the railway interests.

IN THE CHOIR.

THEY seem but yesterday to me,
Though back in mists of long-gone days,
Those sweet old Sundays o'er the sea,
When swallows sang in sunny ways;

And summer blossoms overhead
Made pleasant shadows in the grass,
And o'er her their sweet petals shed,
My pretty, blushing, bright-eyed lass,

Who stepped, with steps so still and light
They scarce would bend a speedwell's spire,
Across the meadows glad and bright,
To sing in that old village choir.

I smelled sweet pinks and lavender,
And knew that she was in her place,
And sometimes when the wind would stir
The old green curtain, saw her face.

And when the choir arose to sing,
I heard no voice save here—ah me!
But seldom out of heaven is heard
Such silver-ringing melody.

I saw no face save hers in all
The rosy row of maidens there,
That stood against the dim old wall,
Like hedge of garden blossoms rare.

And when, the last sweet anthem o'er,
We sought our homeward paths again,
I shily joined her at the door,
We walked together down the lane.

And so they were, of all the week,
The Sabbath days of my desire;
Since then I met her and could speak,
I saw her sweet face in the choir.

Now, just as then on holy days
To that old church the people go,
Over the self-same leafy ways,
And rosy maids, in gowns of snow,

Sit in the old green-curtained choir,
To sing the psalms she used to sing,
While, in a temple builded higher,
Her silver Sabbath praises ring!

But when I look back tenderly,
Through the dim past-land's misty ways,
Still, bright as then, her face I see,
Like some sweet flower through springtime haze.

And when, within the stilly night,
Sweet bells from dreamland spires float by,
They ever wait me, low and light,
The songs she sang 'neath that old sky.

And when I look toward that blest
White temple, though the sky arch higher,
I hear her voice o'er all the rest,
I see her bright face in the choir! L. D.

GEMS.

It is a masterpiece to draw good out of evil, and by the help of virtue to improve misfortunes into blessings.

It does not require a long acquaintance to take a dislike to people—we daguerreotype our character when we least think of it.

To yield to the passions is to give up the struggle; and to acknowledge ourselves beaten; but to contend to the last is to earn the reward of the faithful.

Wives who do not try to keep their husbands will lose them. A man does the "courting" before marriage, and the wife must do it after marriage, or some other woman will.

DRYNESS OF THE SEASON.—Such a hot dry season as the present has not been known in the south of England for the last 70 years. There is not the slightest trace of dew at night. This excessive dryness is owing to the prevailing polar currents. If we could get equatorial currents they would be loaded with vapour,

and we should get rain. In all parts water has been taken to sheep and other cattle. In the neighbourhood of Salisbury and other places where there are great numbers of sheep, water-carts are in use from morning to night. It is found more advisable to take water to the cattle than to drive the latter along hot dusty roads to watering-places. It is curious to know that large quantities of rain have fallen in New York.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

NEW CRYSTALLIZED CARDS.—The poisonous composition with which "mother of pearl" visiting cards are made, was made public some months since. Fuscher gives a simple process whereby nearly the same, and certainly as ornamental results are obtained by a mixture of harmless ingredients. He dissolves six parts by weight of sulphate of magnesia, and six parts of dextrine, in six parts of water, adds a small quantity of glycerine, and boils the liquid for a moment. He then strains the solution, and before it becomes quite cool, spreads it with a camel's-hair brush upon paper previously covered with a thin solution of glue or gelatine. Variegated crystals may be produced by colouring the solution with aniline colours, and preparing the surface of the paper with a mixture of equal parts of white of egg and water, instead of the gelatine solution. When the crystals are dried, the paper is to be run between smooth rollers, or put under a press, when the surface assumes a glazed appearance. The author has recommended a still more useful application in preparing bank notes. A solution prepared with one third the quantity of gum before mentioned, and with no glycerine, may be applied to a lithographic stone, and a copy of the crystallization be transferred to three or four working stones, from which thousands of impressions may be obtained. A background for bank bills may thus be prepared, and as no two crystallizations can be exactly similar, forgery of these notes is impossible. By using yellow paper, photography cannot be employed in copying them.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE VICEROY OF EGYPT'S YACHT.—The Viceroy of Egypt presented Prince Napoleon with a splendid yacht, called the *Dahabieh*, which illustrates the base uses some things come to. This craft has been converted into a floating tap-room at Havre, and the proprietor does a large business in the sale of American "grogs" and "big drinks" in general. People naturally are asking how did the prince part with the vessel?

BURLESQUE ON THE DOG-TAX.—When the law imposing the tax upon dogs was first enacted, a droll classical burlesque was played at the Vaudeville, in which Argus—Ulysses' faithful dog—committed suicide upon the stage to save his master from the tax-gatherer's grasp. The same sort of idea might be carried out in London, by a master muzzling himself for his dog, and making his bow-wow-wow to the policeman.

FARTHER NEWS OF DR. LIVINGSTONE.—On 21st February of the present year, Mr. D. M. Kisch called at Walvisch Bay on his voyage home from the Cape, and saw Mr. Frederick Green, the hunter and traveller, who had heard from natives that a white man, probably Dr. Livingstone, was journeying from the east coast to the north-west. He was supposed to be north of 13 deg. of south lat., and east of 21 deg. of east longitude, or about two or more degrees north of the Zambesi, and not so far west as Lake Ngami. This account fully agrees with that of Martinus Swartz, the other elephant hunter, whose information was communicated some time since. We therefore hope that the great explorer is still pushing his way onward and homeward.

CONFUSION OF TITLES.—The title of Lord Napier for Sir Robert, while at the same time there is already a Lord Napier in the peerage of Scotland, is a difficulty. The patent has, however, been granted, and nothing that can be said will alter it. A few instances from the peerage will show the great confusion caused owing to different noblemen bearing the same title. During the debate on the Suspension Bill an amendment was moved by Earl Grey. This nobleman is usually confounded with Earl de Grey. There is also a Scottish peerage of Gray. Here we have an instance of three noblemen bearing a title all pronounced in the same way. Again, there is Lord Stanley, son of the Earl of Derby, and Lord Stanley of Alderley. As both noblemen have held office, it causes great confusion to all but those who make politics a study. There are three Lords Hastings, two Lords Forbes, and two Lords Erskines. The list of examples might be much increased.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. H. R.—Rub down well with pumice-stone and glass-paper, and then re-paint, taking care that the latter is not too thick.

MATTY.—If the deceased gave you the furniture in the presence of witnesses, the relations can make no legal claim.

ANNE.—To render linen and other materials incombustible, they should be dipped in a solution of tannate of soda or common alum.

EVA.—Rings which have stones in them should always be taken off the finger when the hands are washed, or they will become discoloured.

ROBERT.—Alma Mater is a term used by students to designate the university in which they were educated. It is also applied to nature, and to the earth, which affords us everything we enjoy.

JOSEPH HANDFORD.—1. Pronounce "aide-de-camp" as if written "ade-de-camp," and "fêta" like the English word "fate." 2. Handwriting requires practice, and great care in the formation of the letters.

DICK OF BOSKON.—Your handwriting at present, according to the specimen sent, looks like that of a schoolboy, which time and great practice will remedy. Do not attempt to alter the style.

L. B.—An employer may dismiss a servant upon paying wages for one month beyond the date of actual dismissal; the wages without service being deemed equivalent to the extra board and lodging with service.

FLORA.—Ember-week means a week in which an ember-day falls. The ember-days at the four seasons are the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the first Sunday in Lent, the Feast of Pentecost, September 14, December 13.

ELLEN.—To make red currant shrub, take 1 pint of red currant juice, 1 lb. of loaf-sugar, 1 pint of rum, and 1 quart of brandy; mix, and let it stand eight or nine days, straining once a day; stir through a filtering bag, and bottle it off.

MILTON.—The kosso tree is a native of Abyssinia, and grows to an altitude of about 8,000 feet; its beautiful flowers, which hang in profusion on every branch, are a specific against the tape-worm from which all Abyssinians suffer.

ERNESTINE.—The eldest sons of peers above the degree of baron, bear their father's arms and supporters with a label, and use the coronet appertaining to their father's second title; but all the younger sons bear their arms, without either coronet or supporters.

ELLER.—Doctrinaires was a name given since 1814 to a class of politicians in France who upheld the constitutional principles, as opposed to arbitrary monarchical power. The party came into office in 1830, under Louis Philippe, and fell with him in 1848.

FLORENCE.—1. The marriage was legal. If you contract another marriage, your first husband being alive, you will commit an act of bigamy. 2. If you can discover your husband's whereabouts, you can punish him for his cruel desertion by application to a police magistrate.

WILHELMINA.—We pity your distress at not being able to obtain an introduction to the object of your admiration. At the same time, if, as you state, your friends are well known to each other, we must think the young gentleman over bashful in not finding the means of breaking the ice.

LAURA.—To make bishop, roast a lemon, and stick it full of cloves; meantime boil in a pint of water equal quantities of mace, cinnamon, cloves, &c.; put the lemon into a bowl, and pour over it the extract from the spices, add a bottle of port, nearly boiling, and sweeten with loaf sugar.

FOOT BETTY.—If your husband were of sound mind at the time of the marriage, the ceremony was legal. His relations can only set it aside by proving the contrary; but can you not afford to seek the advice of a solicitor? The matter is a very delicate one, and we cannot advise without a knowledge of the details.

PERPLEXITY.—As you are young, cut your hair regularly once a fortnight, and brush it at least three times a day for a quarter of an hour each time with a hard penetrating brush; the nutritive matter will thus be made to flow from root to point, the hair will retain its colour for many years, and the growth of gray hair be prevented.

JESSIE D. O.—If determined to become an actress, you will first have to educate yourself in dancing, music, &c., and then join a dramatic school, which of course will be attended with considerable expense; but our advice is, abandon all notions of such a course. 2. Handwriting requires considerable practice.

EDITH DUCHILLIA.—1. There never has been a second volume to the work you mention, but other books have been published by the same author. 2. To clean old gloves: Place a little new milk in one saucer, and in another a clean

cloth or folded towel, with a piece of brown soap; on the folded towel spread out the glove, take a piece of clean flannel, dip it in the milk, then rub some of the soap on it, and rub the glove downwards towards the finger ends, holding it firmly; continue doing this until the glove is white, looks of a dingy yellow; or if coloured, dark and spotted; when cleaned, lay the gloves to dry, and they will be as good as new. 3. To remove oil stains from silk: To 2 oz. of spirits of wine, add 1 oz. of French chalk, and 5 oz. of tobacco-pipe clay, both well powdered; make it into rolls about the length of a finger, and let them dry; apply either dry or wet, and afterwards brush the part. 4. Colour of hair brown; we perceive no difference in either of the specimens sent.

JAMES.—Amnesty means an act by which two belligerent powers, at variance, agree to bury past differences in oblivion. Amnesty is either general and unlimited, or particular and restrained, though most commonly universal, without exceptions or conditions. The term is used by a victor to imply a pardon of all who had been in arms against him.

COLIN.—To fill the office of a permanent clerk of Chelsea Hospital, the following examination is necessary: Writing to dictation, copying from MSS., arithmetic to reduction and practice. The patronage is vested in the Paymaster-General. Salary of first-class clerks is 450*l.*; second-class, 330*l.*; third-class, 300*l.* to 300*l.*; temporary clerks, 100*l.*

KENT FOREST.—A young man obtaining credit of a tailor while a minor, and refusing to pay the same when of full age, would in our opinion be a rogue. At the same time the law stands thus: If a contract has been entered into between an infant (i.e. a person under twenty-one years of age) and one of full age, the infant may take advantage of his minority, and resist the completion of his contract.

W. L.—Burgage-tenants are those who are inhabitants of boroughs, and who by custom hold their lands or tenements of the Queen, or other person, by a rent certain. By the operation of the enfranchisement Act, these persons are rapidly diminishing. Burgess is a person whose name appears upon the Burgess Roll of Parliamentary Boroughs. It is also the technical term applied to a borough member.

AT VESPER.

Silently, dreamily, on we went,
'Neath the mellow light of the summer moon
And the stars, which leaned from the firmament,
To mirror their faces in the calm lagoon.
Suddenly, rapidly, passed our barque,
A gilded barge, with a plashing oar,
And a white hand parted the curtain dark,
And a face looked forth to the moonlit shore;
Oh! never before saw I face so fair;
And never again, but in happy dreams,
Saw I Goldenhair! Little Goldenhair!
Of the fairy boat, 'mid the starry gleams!
Over a balcony, velvet lined,
Methought I saw her one carnival hour,
But the eager mariners pressed on behind,
And all that I gained was a scattered flower.
Sometimes I fancied I saw the shine
Of her golden tresses low bent in prayer,
But the face upraised from the dim-lit shrine
Proved never the face of my Goldenhair!
Oh, never again comes the face so fair!
Oh, never again, but in happy dreams,
See I Goldenhair! Little Goldenhair!
In her fairy boat 'mid the starry gleams!

J. J. L.

J. MARSHALL.—Calliph in Arabic means visor, or apostle, the title assumed by the Sophi of Persia, in the succession of Ali, and since 1517, by the Sultans of Turkey as the successors of Mahomet. The caliph began with Abubeker, the father of the prophet's second wife; he died A.D. 631. In process of time the soldiers or sultans engrossed all the civil power, and little but the title was left to the caliphs, and that chiefly in matters of religion.

J. K. D.—1. A peer of the realm cannot under any circumstances sit in the House of Commons. 2. A welcher is a man who takes money for bets, which if he loses, he has no intention of paying. There are many men who infect our racecourses, who offer to lay odds against the various horses, and when they have taken a large amount from unwary backers, decamp without waiting to see the result of the race.

LORENZO.—The National Gallery is in Trafalgar Square, and is open to the public on Saturdays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and on Thursdays and Fridays to students only. There are nearly 500 pictures now on view; they are all of the foreign schools, with the exception of the Turner collection. The Italian school stands first in point of numbers, comprising about 230 pictures, 163 of which are church subjects.

A. PARKHURST.—Quicksilver, in its liquid state, is commonly called virgin mercury; it has very extraordinary properties, and is used to show the weight of the atmosphere, and its continual variations. Its use in refining silver was discovered A.D. 1540. The chief mines are at Almaden, in Spain, and at Idria, in Illyria; one was discovered at Ceylon in 1797. Corrosive sublimate, a deadly poison, is a combination of mercury and chlorine.

ALEXIS.—The following is the origin of the "Nag's Head Story." Matthew Parker was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth, in 1533, by Bishop Barlow, Coverdale, Scory, and Hodgkins. Many years after, the Romish writers brought forth a tale of Parker and the others having been consecrated at the Nag's Head Tavern, Chesapeake, by Scory, in an irregular manner. This tale was refuted by Burnet, and is now given up by Romanists.

FANNY.—The first mulberry trees planted in England are in the gardens of Sion House. Shakespeare planted a mulberry tree with his own hands at Stratford-upon-Avon. Garrick, Macmillan, and others were entertained under it in 1742. Shakespeare's house was afterwards sold to a clergyman of the name of Galsworthy, who cut down the mulberry-tree for fuel, 1765; but a silvermith purchased the whole, and manufactured it into memorials.

ESTHER.—Almost all kinds of flowers sleep during the night; the marigold goes to bed at sunset, and rises weeping; many plants are so sensitive that their leaves close during the passing of a cloud; the dandelion opens at five or six in the morning, and closes at nine in the evening; the crocus, tulip, and many others, close their blossoms at dif-

ferent hours towards evening; but, on the contrary, there are some flowers which turn night into day, such as the night-flowering cactus, which begins to expand its lovely sweet-scented blossoms in the twilight; at midnight it is in full bloom, and closes at the dawn of day.

JOSEPH.—Morganatic marriages are those when the left hand is given instead of the right, between a man of superior and a woman of inferior rank, when it is stipulated that the latter and her children shall not inherit the possessions of the former, nor enjoy the rank. The children are legitimate. These marriages are frequently contracted in Germany by royalty and the higher nobility. George I. was thus married, and later, the King of Denmark to the Countess of Danner, in 1850.

ONE IN DISTRESS.—A landlord is not justified in forcing the padlock of a barn-door, nor the outer door of a granary or stable, nor can he break open gates, or knock down fences for the purpose of distraining for rent; but he may open doors and locks by turning the key, lifting the latch, or drawing back the bolt, by the usual means adopted by persons having access. In all cases where the landlord or his agent can get in without committing a trespass, he may lawfully enter and distrain.

PAMELA.—The wedding ring is always put and worn on the fourth finger of the left hand; because in ancient times it was supposed that an artery ran from this part directly to the heart, and therefore, that it was the place whence this pledge of love might send its mysterious message most readily to the supposed centre of the affections. The bridal cake is no less sanctified by antiquity than the ring; it is a symbol of plenty, and it is intended to express the hope that the newly-married pair may be always supplied with abundance of the good things of this life.

ERNESTINE.—The term mythology signifies the traditions respecting the gods of any people. The Egyptians and Babylonians, forgetting the invisible and true God, first worshipped positive objects, as the sun and moon; then transferred their adoration to the operations of nature, and the passions of their own minds, embodied them under symbolical representations, and ultimately worshipped the symbols themselves. Though it is supposed to have introduced mythology among the Egyptians 1821 A.C., and Cadmus, the worship of the Egyptian and Phœnician deities among the Greeks, 1493 A.C.

ALICE.—In ancient times mirrors were made of metal, and from a passage in the Mosala writings, we learn that the mirrors used by the Jewish women were made of brass. Mirrors in silver were introduced by Praxiteles, 323 A.C. Mirrors or looking-glasses were made at Venice, A.D. 1200; and in England in 1673. The improvements in manufacturing plate-glass, and that of very large size, has cheapened looking-glasses very much. Methods of storing glass by a solution of silver, thus avoiding the use of mercury, so injurious to the health of the workmen, were made known by M. Petitjean in 1851, and by M. Cimog in 1861.

DON QUIXOTE, twenty, 5 ft. 7 in., fair, blue eyes, dark hair, good tempered, and fond of home. Respondent must be of medium height, good looking, and about twenty.

A. E. C. and M. A. S.—"A. E. C.," twenty-four, tall, and fair. "M. A. S.," nineteen, tall, and dark; both cheerful, domesticated, and fond of home; tradesmen preferred.

DON CESAR, twenty-eight, 5 ft. 8 in., dark, hazel eyes, black hair and whiskers, good tempered, fond of home, and a petty officer. Respondent must be about twenty-four, good looking, fond of home, and thoroughly domesticated.

DON PEDRO, twenty, 5 ft. 8 in., fair, blue eyes, steady, good tempered, fond of home, serving on board H.M.S. Wyvern, and in good circumstances. Respondent must be pretty, domesticated, and fond of home.

ANNE and ALICE—"Anne," eighteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, dark brown hair, and good looking. "Alice," seventeen, medium height, fair, hazel eyes, light brown hair, and pretty.

EMILY and KATE—"Emily," medium height, dark, good looking, cheerful, and industrious. Respondent must be a respectable tradesman, about twenty-seven. "Kate," sixteen, medium height, fair, light hair, and blue eyes.

M. N. O., twenty-eight, tall, fair, accomplished, handsome, thoroughly domesticated, and possessing a little money with other expectations. Respondent must be gentlemanly and good tempered.

MAID OF MANCHESTER, eighteen, 5 ft. 3 in., light brown hair, gray eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be rather tall, good looking, and fond of home; an actor preferred.

POLLY and ANNE—"Polly," twenty, dark hair and eyes, good tempered, and domesticated. Respondent must be fair. "Anne," eighteen, dark hair, hazel eyes, good tempered, and affectionate. Respondent must be tall and dark.

ANNE E., thirty-four, tall, dark hair, well educated, good tempered, affectionate, and has a comfortable home of her own. Respondent must be about forty, well educated, steady, and industrious; one employed in the City preferred; no objection to a widower.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

FREDERICK NAPIER is responded to by—"Emily B.," tall, dark, respectable, fond of home, and thoroughly domesticated.

ALICE TAYLOR by—"A. S.," twenty, 5 ft. 6 in., blue eyes, auburn hair, fair, and a sailor.

JULIA by—"A. S.," twenty-four, 5 ft. 11 in., and a professional.

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